A LITTLE BOOK OF BURNS LORE

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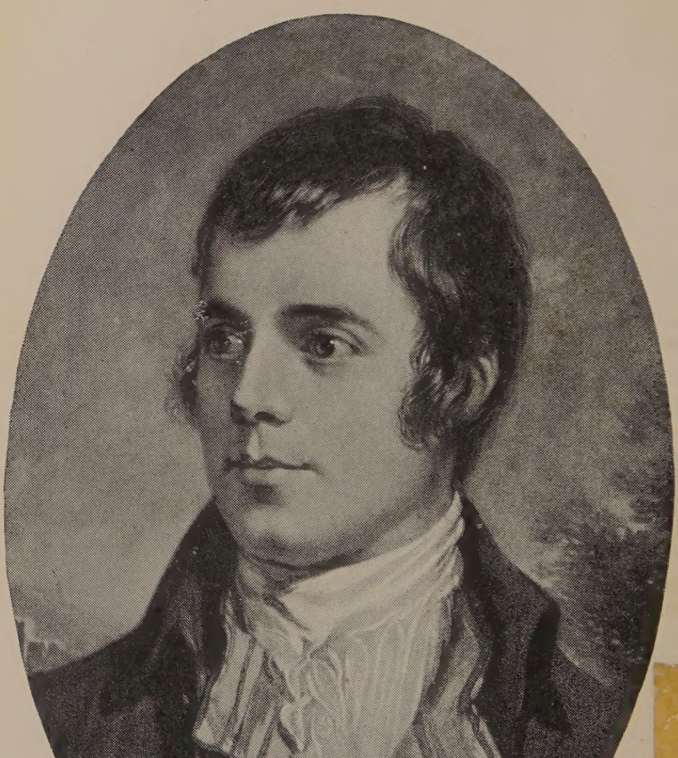

A LITTLE BOOK OF BURNS LORE

COMPILED BY

JOHN D. ROSS, LL.D.

EDITOR OF "HIGHLAND MARY," "ROUND BURNS' GRAVE,"
"BURNSIANA," "BURNS' CLARINDA,"
"HENLEY AND BURNS," ETC.

WITH A PREFACE BY

JAMES D. LAW

AUTHOR OF "DREAMS O' HAME, AND OTHER POEMS," ETC.

STIRLING:

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PREFACE.

Robert Burns is of perennial interest to all students of Universal Literature, while to his own people he remains a permanently paramount figure both as a Poet and as a Person. New editions of his writings are constantly appearing, and several extensive Biographies of him have recently been written and liberally reviewed. The world in recent years has radically revised its views of Burns on many important points as new documents have come to light, or are permitted to be published, and "Scotia's darling bard" is now shown in a much fairer and truer light than hitherto had been possible from the mistakenly prejudiced concoctions of his contemporaries or even the wilfully biased compilations of later would-be authorities. We now have an astonishingly complete collection of the writings of Burns in prose and in verse, and almost every year important and true items relating to his life and habits are added to the meagre outlines that first did duty as his personal history. His MSS. and his first editions are steadily increasing in value, and will continue to do so as sure as their numbers are limited and our rich collectors become more numerous. Even as I write these lines the cable informs us that at a recent London auction sale (April 8), a Philadelphia dealer paid £1,750 for a fine specimen of the Kilmarnock Burns. As is well known, the Poet made his initial appearance

in book form *via* the subscription route, his objective at the time being less poetic fame than passage money to waft him to Jamaica, where he had secured a situation as a plantation overseer. Probably had Burns got thus far he would have sooner or later joined many of his countrymen in the new United States of America, but Fate intervened, and Fortune kept him back to dree his weird at home. His total profits from the first edition did not much exceed twenty pounds, and his local printer would not assume the risk of a second impression. Several subscribers to the first edition repented of their bargain when the book was ready for delivery, and on the only list now known to be extant, against the name of such a welcher (one "Lorimer") Burns himself wrote, "The blockhead refused it." Perhaps that very volume is the one recently sold at the Kilmarnock record price—for the time being.

The present Miscellany by Dr. Ross is an interesting addition to his imposing library of Burnsiana, making the twenty-third complete volume from the pen of this painstaking editor and authority on all that relates to his admired and beloved compatriot. The very titles of his compilations are alluring, and the varied items in their total bulk constitute a most fascinating anthology of valuable contributions, featuring episodes and out-of-the-way information authentically associated with the life and writings of Burns. No other

collector on either side of the Atlantic has been so prolific in his garnerings of personalia; no other Burns scholar anywhere has given us such a series of humanly critical compendiums, and all lovers of Burns, and indeed of Scottish literature generally, owe a distinct debt of gratitude to Dr. Ross for the convenient preservation of many "waifs and strays" that otherwise might be difficult to locate, scattered as they are in magazines, newspapers, and private repositories. In this connection, I am very hopeful that the present volume will be successful from the publisher's point of view, and that it may prove to be the initial or forerunner of a series of similar "Little Books of Burns Lore."

JAMES D. LAW.

Roxborough,
Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A.,
April, 1925.

Inscribed

To DUNCAN MACINNES, Esq.,
Royal Chief Order of Scottish Clans,
In appreciation of his many sterling qualities as a man: his enthusiasm for the land of his birth, and his patriotism as an American citizen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

THE Editor acknowledges, with thanks, his indebtedness to the various authors whose articles are included in this volume. While he has not been able to communicate with each one of them personally on the subject, he has, at the same time, been careful to give due credit to all. In this connection, if anyone has been overlooked, he hopes that the giving of a permanent place in the volume to their contribution to Burns' literature will, in a slight measure, help to compensate for any seeming lack of respect or acknowledgement of their individual rights to their own writings.

JOHN D. ROSS.

A LITTLE BOOK OF BURNS LORE.

THE BIRTHDAY OF BURNS.

UNIQUE is the glory which his admiring countrymen and their descendants shower on the memory of the Scottish ploughman-poet. To what man of letters, national bard or otherwise, of the present or of an age remote, does his race, of near kin or far, pay such constant and unqualified devotion as Scotsmen do to the bard of Ayr, particularly on his every birthday anniversary, the 25th of January? Universal is the homage with which they reward his genius, for in every town and city throughout the broad earth a company of Scots, large or small, gathers on that day to do him honour in feast and dance and song. Unstinted is the love—a broad love, too, unlike, in this, the national characteristic, which is so illustrative of Kipling's line:

> Ye are sons of the blood, less sure to bless than to ban—

which they bear him, for woe to the critic who dares, in any Scottish company, to point to or even to hint at any of the human weaknesses by which the life of "rantin', rovin' Robin" was beset.

The anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns is the red letter day in the Scottish calendar at home and abroad. What would have been the thoughts of the brilliant, happy-dispositioned, sensitive-minded, intensely emotional, mirth-loving, honest and independent young Scotsman of the "auld toon of Ayr," who brought his countrymen of culture and of care to his feet by his greatest ambition.

> For puir auld Scotland's sake,
> To sing a sang, at least,

had he dreamed that a century after his death his name would be sounded with praise akin to worship in almost every hamlet on the globe? Little did he think, although he himself prophesied that he would "be better appreciated a hundred years hence," that on the wings of the four winds of the earth his name and fame would be borne over the seas to the uttermost ends, and that the tributes of his own loved native land would be echoed in the depths of the African forest, from the plains of Australia, on India's coral strand, and would ring back with a wild enthusiasm from the hills and valleys of the western world, to which at one time he almost came, even to the confines of the pole, where the miners in the Klondike will gather round the campfire and make the frozen regions of the great and solemn Northwest ring with the melodies of the songs which sprang from his mind and heart?

Stately mausoleums have been erected in many places to commemorate his life and work and personality, and innumerable statues, the finest examples of the sculptors' art, have been set up all over the world, but this constantly swelling pean of the universal admiration and love of his countrymen and of the world is the greatest monument of them all.

Perhaps the fact that the life of Burns was full of hardships and disappointments, and that his genius and personality were triumphant over the coldness of a local world that, with a most remarkable agility, recognised his talent, but at the same time turned a frigid shoulder toward his efforts to lift himself into a better material state, is a reason for this remarkable adoration. He had been kicked and cuffed, and keenly did his ultra-sensitive nature suffer from the plots and attacks of his enemies, toward whom he rarely if ever turned in the spirit of compromise. To suffer and to smile—to grin and bear it—is one of the sure ways for a Scot to win the admiration of his fellows. Burns kept on smiling amid his misfortunes, and, more, he kept on singing. And it did not come to him in any literal way to practise the injunction regarding the turning of the other cheek. Instead, he employed his pen in the making of some of the most scathing examples of sarcastic verse which the language has ever been employed to build. Who can tell how much the

terrible satire which Burns penned under the title of "Holy Willie's Prayer" helped to lift the Scottish kirk from its old time narrowness?

The tenderness of the humanity of Burns is shown in his verses "To a Mouse" and "To a Mountain Daisy," which were composed while the poet was at the plough. "I could point out," wrote his brother Gilbert, "the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plow was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise."

The beauty of the love songs which Burns gave to the world is of a grade which has been surpassed by no writer in any age. "Afton Water," an apostrophe to that beautiful river, written upon the Coitsfield dairymaid, the dearly beloved and long remembered Highland Mary, saddens with its wonderful cadence the most prosaic of mortals, and with its incomparable gentle sorrowing soothes the surging of the stormiest heart:

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove, whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

And the charming classic "O' a' the Airts," written in honour of his wife, Jean Armour, while alone at lovely Ellisland building a home for her and for their children, is a touching proof of the fact that, though it had passed through many a fiery ordeal, his heart was still full of tenderness for her who was his first love, and whose devotion through good report and ill never allowed a murmur to escape her lips.

O' a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the West,
For there the bonny lassie lives,
The lassie I love best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between,
But day and night, my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

Through the hundred years and over which have sunk into oblivion since this most remarkable singer gave to the world a series of lyrics and poems which have made his fame an eternal endurance and his personality beloved beyond that of any other in the world's history, his influence has grown like the mustard seed. His countrymen have marched to battle and to death with a magnificence of fearlessness born of the strains of "Scots Wha Hae," a song which, to quote Carlyle, should be sung with the voice of a whirlwind. (And Burns was one of the very few, by the way, over whom Carlyle did not ride rough shod.) The

pathos of "Man Was Made to Mourn" has softened many a miser's and tyrant's heart, and the stirring, rugged lines of "A Man's a Man for a' That" have spurred on many a wearied life to high and noble effort and the achievement of heroic independence. He struck the chords of the national heart, touching the keys here and there with surpassing effect by the mere mention of Scotland's hill and dales and streams, dashing the colour with ingenuous manipulation on the pictures of national customs and character, working in the shade and tint with a truthfulness which will stand the wear and tear of time. The influence of his democratic spirit has played no small part in the building up of the sentiments which have made our beloved western land the safe and abiding home of Freedom. It is no wonder, then, that Scotsmen honour the memory of Robert Burns, and no wonder that the name of the humble Scottish singer has become a household word wherever the Anglo-Saxon tongue is spoken and sung.

DAVID DUNCAN FLETCHER.

BURNS AND HIS LOVE OF BOOKS.

THE diffusion of knowledge was a favourite object with Burns. For this he established his reading and debating clubs in the west, and in the same spirit he desired to excite a love of literature among the peasants of Dunscore. He undertook the

management of a small parochial library, and wrote out the rules. Mr. Riddell, of Friars-Carse, and other gentlemen, contributed money and books. The library commenced briskly, but soon languished. The poet could not always be present at the meetings; the subscribers lived far apart; disputes and disunion crept in, and it died away like a flower which fades for want of watering. Burns alludes ironically to the scheme in one of his letters. "Wisdom," he averred, "might be gained by the mere handling of books." His letters to the booksellers on the subject of this subscription library do him much honour; his choice of authors, which business was actually left to his discretion, being in the highest degree judicious.

Such institutions are now common, indeed almost universal, in the rural districts of Southern Scotland, but it should never be forgotten that Burns was among the first, if not the very first, to set the example. "He was so good," says Mr. Riddell, "as to take the whole management of this concern; he was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to our little society, which will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit and exertions for its improvement and information.

COLIN RAE BROWN.

Colin Rae Brown was born at Greenock, August

19, 1821, and died at London, September 11, 1897. He was a man of most engaging manners, and was held in high esteem by every one who knew him. "He contributed," says the *Burns Chronicle* for 1898, "both in prose and poetry to the leading periodicals of the day, and his Burns enthusiasm was such that, for half a century he was the head and front of every movement in honour of the National Bard. For many years he was honorary secretary of the Greenock Burns' Club, and he was closely associated with Professor Wilson ('Christopher North') in organising the great Ayr Festival of 1844. . . . . It was in the columns of the *Bulletin* that he made his first appeal to Scotsmen for the erection of the Wallace Monument, and when, mainly through his advocacy, the movement took practical shape, he was appointed convener and chairman of the permanent executive committee. In conjunction with Sir Archibald Alison, Sheriff Glassford Bell, Professor Nichol, and other representative Scotsmen, he organised the Burns Centenary Festival of 1859, and it was greatly owing to his characteristic energy that that event was such a memorable success. He was one of the founders of the Burns Federation, of which body he had been an honorary vice-president since its foundation in 1885. It was also on his suggestion that the Federation undertook the publication of the *Burns Chronicle*, for the success of which he evinced the most lively concern down to the day

of his death. When the centenary of the publication of the First Edition was celebrated in Kilmarnock in 1886, as the representative of the London Burns Club he was the honoured guest of the brilliant array of the talent of the West which that occasion brought together. Among his personal friends were De Quincey, Samuel Lover, and Colonel Glencairn Burns, the youngest surviving son of the Poet. Mr. Rae Brown occupies a high position among our recent minor poets. In his early years he published 'Lays and Lyrics by Sea and Land,' and more recently, 'Noble Love' and 'The Dawn of Love,' all of which have had an extensive circulation."

A HUNDRED YEARS.

1796-1896.

A HUNDRED YEARS! yet the glorious throne
Of Scottish Song is still thine own—
A type of the Centuries waiting thee,
Who sang the Charter of the Free!

Hustling the living and trampling the dead,
The years rush on with resistless tread—
Crowns and Kingdoms may disappear,
But Time ever yieldeth another year.

Humble the bed that gave thee birth:
Lowly as that from which—from Earth—
Thy spirit leaped, strong in its faith,
And sought the friendly arms of Death.

Strong in its faith ! faith in a World,
Repentant, that so long had hurled
Its dire damnation on the head
Soon number'd with the mighty Dead.

Then, like a dazzling Splendour came
That Worship of thy name and fame—
To scorch Detraction's lying tongue,
As forth Truth's golden joy-bells rung !

A Hundred Years ! how swift their flight !
From darkness to unclouded light—
To where thy Fame's perennial Sun
Its endless course hath but begun !

With silence, then, shall the toast be met
Of " The Bard " whose sun shall never set—
Flashing its glory from shore to shore,
A joy of the world for evermore—?

With *silence ?* no ! or said or sung,
Thy name shall lie on ev'ry tongue,
And in the hearts of all mankind
The deathless fame of BURNS enshrined !

COLIN RAE BROWN.

BURNSIANA.

IN Wood's edition of the Songs of Scotland, published in 1849, there appeared the following reminiscences of Burns, by Miss Logan of Cumnock, obtained by the editor, Mr. Graham, through the Rev. James Murray, then minister of the parish :—

" RECOLLECTIONS OF BURNS, BY MISS JANET LOGAN, OF CUMNOCK, DAUGHTER OF HUGH LOGAN, ESQ., OF THAT ILK.

"Remembers having met with Robert Burns the poet, about sixty years ago, in the house of Mrs. Merry, Old Cumnock. He had not then visited Edinburgh, but was farmer of Mossgiel, in the neighbourhood of Mauchline. Mrs. Merry was youngest daughter of Mr. Rankine of Adamhill, whom Burns in one of his productions describes as 'Rough, rude, and ready-witted.' Mrs. Merry was well known to be the heroine of 'The Lea-rig.' Some say it was another person, but it was not so. Remembers Mrs. Merry's having told her that Burns, when he visited her father's house for the first time, on being shown into a room, went round a piece of carpet which only partially covered the floor—as was usual in those times—as if afraid of setting foot upon it; but whether he did so by way of sly burlesque, or really from the notion that such things were intended only for his *betters*, does not know. Remembers, on the occasion above referred to, seeing Burns walking about the streets of Cumnock with Walter Morton, the excise-officer of the place. Remembers, that when Burns and Morton came in with others who were to meet with them, Mrs. Merry remarked to him, by way of joke, that all the *yill-wives* of Cumnock had been put nearly beside themselves at his appearance with Morton—thinking him the supervisor. Remembers Burns turning round to his companion, and exclaiming, rather more warmly than the occasion seemed to require, 'That *I* should be mistaken

for one of your—set!' Does not remember any of Burns' remarks during the evening. Thinks of the conversation as chiefly of a political nature. Remembers that Burns was very animated, and apparently in high spirits. Has been at many *rockings*, or parties of a similar kind, and has had many opportunities of marking the manners of those with whom the poet at that time associated. Thinks that his manners and behaviour were not superior to those of his compeers. Is rather of opinion that he was somewhat coarse in his behaviour, and boisterous in his address. Remembers that he wore his hair tied—was good looking—thick-set—not very tall. Has heard that he played the violin, but never was present when he played on that instrument. Never heard him sing. (Signed) 'JANET LOGAN.'"

The editor appended the following note:—

The editor of this work, when thanking the Rev. Mr. Murray and Miss Logan for the above communication, made the following observations in his letter of 13th June, 1849:—"I mentioned to you that the only person I know now, who was well acquainted with Burns, is my mother. I told you of Burns' offer to write to her a journal of his Highland tour, and of her hesitation to accept his offer, without the concurrence of her father and mother. Burns' pride was hurt by that hesitation, and he never renewed the offer, and never wrote a line to her afterwards. Burns

was a very frequent guest at my grandfather's house in Edinburgh, during Burns' residence there; and it was in that way that he became acquainted with my mother, who was then a young unmarried woman, and who certainly could not with propriety accept of Burns' offer of letter-writing, without the sanction of her parents. Burns must, at that time, have received some polish of manner from his intercourse with Edinburgh society; for my mother describes him as a man who conducted himself with perfect propriety amongst his superiors in *social* position. It is easy to imagine how quickly a man of Burns' tact and shrewd observation would adapt himself to the manners of his friends in the metropolis of Scotland so far as matters of mere *etiquette* went." The editor's mother has often spoken to him of Burns' remarkable conversational powers. She has also told him that no one of the portraits of Burns that she has seen—nor even the one by Skirving—gives an idea of the extraordinary fire and expression of Burns' eyes.

BURNS' ANCESTORS.

In a sunless, sleepy little hollow in the agricultural county of Kincardine is a graveyard which is annually visited by many Scotsmen who worship at the shrine of Robert Burns. In Glenbervie Kirkyard, the lonely burying ground referred to,

is the dust of several connecting links between Scotland's bard and the northern home of his father; and in June of 1885, in connection therewith, a ceremony of national importance took place. That was the handing over to the parish heritors of two renovated tombstones which were found about fifty years ago in a dilapidated condition, broken and weather-corroded, lying among the long grass of the old kirkyard. One of the stones had originally been erected about 150 years ago, and the other about thirty years previously, over the graves of members of the Burness family, who tilled the ground in the immediate neighbourhood. For well-nigh 200 years after those farmers of the Mearns were laid to their rest, men and women passed by the tombstones with only a fleeting thought of the men whose names were inscribed thereon. Time passed. William Burness, the son of the farmer of Clochinhill, near Stonehaven, left his paternal home to fight his own battle with the world. Edinburgh was then the Mecca of Scottish gardeners, and he made his way south to the capital. From Edinburgh he passed to Ayrshire, and there he and his wife made their home in the "auld clay biggin'" where their son Robert Burns was born. Then Scotland and Scottish patriotism had a mouthpiece, and the whence of Robert Burns' family was a subject discussed by eminent genealogists and litterateurs.

The poet sang and passed away, but his memory lived. The graves of his ancestors were visited, the neglected and broken tombstones discovered and renovated, and the fact of their presence made known to an interested world. The inscriptions on the restored tombstones sufficiently describe their origin and restoration :—

1. In memory of James Burnes, tenant in Brawlinmuir, died 23rd January, 1746. Margaret Falconer, his wife, died 28th December, 1749. This tomb of the great grand-parents of the poet Robert Burns, restored by subscription, 1885.
2. In memory of William Burnes, tenant in Bogjorgan, who died, 1715 ; and Christian Fotheringham, his wife. This tomb of the great grand-uncle of the poet Robert Burns, restored by subscription, 1885.

THE ADVENTURES OF A "KILMARNOCK BURNS."

Probably no book in the literary history of Scotland has, as a mere book, had a more romantic career than this volume, which contains the first-fruits of its greatest man of genius. A thin octavo in form, it was issued, poorly printed on poor paper, in 1786, from the press of its printer, John Wilson of Kilmarnock, at the humble price of three shillings. Six hundred copies were printed and

bound in boards, white as to the back, and bluish-gray as to the sides. In a month not a copy remained unsold—it is doubtful, indeed, if the poet himself got a copy—and the author's capital was recruited to the extent of £20; not a bad return. Notwithstanding the success of the venture, so poor an opinion had Wilson of the volume that he declined to entertain the idea of a second edition, unless Burns could defray the cost of the paper to print it on—namely, £27. This was simply impossible for the man into whose pouch the deil had entered once for all, and so the poet bade auld Killie farewell as an author. It was then that Burns, disheartened at his prospects, took his chest as far as Greenock, on his way to the West Indies; but here Dr. Blacklock, through Burns' friend Lawrie, stepped in with proposals for the first Edinburgh edition, which finally stopped his migration; and before the beginning of 1787 Creech was advertising the first Edinburgh edition, which had an immense list of subscribers, and was quickly followed by another, hardly less successful. It is now believed that, both as regards the number of editions and the aggregate sale, the *Poems* of Burns stand only below the Bible and Shakespeare. About fifty years ago (1846) a somewhat unaccountable rise took place in the value of the Kilmarnock Burns. I suppose the cause may be looked for in the rise of the American book-collector, and the comparative

scarcity of the volume, many copies having, from much handling, been worn out of existence. The Kilmarnock Burns was described in an early bibliographical book of Mr. Slater's as "perhaps for its size the most valuable book in existence."

As when this was written the market price for a copy was about £120, I have often wondered in what terms Mr. Slater would describe it now that it has changed hands, as it did the other day at Paisley, for £1,000. When I was in the book trade in the city of London, about thirty years ago, I had an adventure with a copy which may amuse your readers. Among my customers was a Scotsman, a native of Dundee, but then in business in Whitechapel. He was not a man of much culture, but he had, I believe, been smitten by the late Mr. Lamb of Dundee with the craze for the collection of rare books. Mr. Lamb had himself a very fine copy of the Kilmarnock Burns, nearly perfect, which at his sale brought some £575. This is the second highest price the volume had yet fetched at auction, and it was whispered that the price, which was then abnormal, arose entirely from the fact of two dealers bidding against each other in the interests of the same American client.

To resume my story, my customer one day expressed a strong desire to have a copy of the Kilmarnock Burns. When I asked him what price he would give, he promptly responded £50. On this basis I set to work, and at last heard of a

copy in the hands of an Edinburgh bookseller. When I asked him his price, he said £25; but, when he sent for it on my inspection, he was so honourable as to point out that the last leaf of the glossary appeared to be in facsimile, and the price would in consequence be reduced to £20. It was a poor copy, bound in contemporary calf, probably a presentation copy. I at once waited with it on my customer. I did not see any reason why I should abate the price to him, but I was careful to point out to him the doubtful leaf. He, however, was hardly a man to appreciate such a technical point as that, and so he cheerfully drew me a cheque for £50.

About a month after his purchase my client waited on me to say that he was sorry he could not keep that copy, as the thought of that leaf kept him awake o' nights. He therefore resolved to sell it, and I might look out for a better one. He possessed some small pieces in Burns' handwriting, and one of these he inserted under the front board of the volume as a sort of *bonne-bouche*. He then sent it to Messrs. Puttick & Simpson's saleroom, where it fetched £75!

JAMES DRUMMOND (in 1906).

THE "AULD BRIG" OF AYR.

TRADITION is uncertain concerning the exact date of the "auld brig." Some authorities locate its origin about 1232, while others make it younger by a century and a half. Six centuries at least look out upon the visitor from its mediæval arches. To Burns, however, the romance associated with the bridge is due. In 1786 the bard was part-tenant of Mossgiel, thirteen miles west of Ayr. He was floundering in the trough of the sea economically, yet overhead his star of genius was fast rising towards Fame's zenith. In August of that wonderful Burnsian year his first volume of poems was published by John Wilson, in Kilmarnock; but the book did not contain the poem of "The Brigs of Ayr," which appeared for the first time in the second and Edinburgh edition in April, 1787.

The county town of Ayr had two market-days in the week—Tuesday and Friday. Burns was frequently in Ayr on business, and Friday, apparently, was his favourite day. He would drive to market in the farm-cart, or ride. Chief among his numerous friends in Ayr were Robert Aiken—"My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!"—to whom "The Cottar's Saturday Night" was inscribed—and John Ballantyne, to whom the like compliment was paid in "The Brig of Ayr." Ballantyne was a banker, and was Provost of the Burgh in 1786. Aiken was a writer; both were

foremost among townsmen. The earliest reference to "The Brigs of Ayr" occurs in a letter to Aiken, dated mysteriously, "Ayrshire, 1786," and written manifestly when Burns was in hiding, that is to say, about September, in which he remarks thus :— "There is scarcely anything hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr. Ballantyne by publishing my poem of 'The Brigs of Ayr.'" Burns had failed to arrange with the undiscerning Wilson for a second edition, notwithstanding an offer from Ballantyne of £27 towards expenses.

The poem, therefore, which has conferred a world's name upon the "auld brig" must have been composed very early in the autumn of 1786. When wandering in Ayrshire, keeping out of the way of the Armours, anxious about the future, a love-lorn swain, the poet would be much in Ayr. He had spent a night in the town, and dreamt himself into the fantasy of the poem, probably after returning from a midnight ramble by the river, and in sight of the contrast between the "auld brig" and the coming new one. In fancy he sees "two dusky forms dart through the midnight air," and alight opposite each other—the one on the "auld brig," the other on the "rising piers" of its rival about to be. These "Sprites" derived their features from the architecture of the bridges; "auld brig appeared o' ancient

Pictish race, the vera wrinkles Gothic in his face ; " whereas " new brig was buskit in a braw new coat, that he at Lon'on frae ane Adams got." Thereupon the " Sprites " of the two bridges engage in a duel in verse, which in point of tone and manner is reminiscent somewhat of the " flyting " of old days between such Scotch vernacular poets as Dunbar and Kennedy. It is modernity pitted against antiquity in a tourney of wit ; the embryonic commercialism of Scotland in the last quarter of the eighteenth century against the old, slow-sure soporific methods of the then departing ages ; the pride of years against the conceit of youth. In course of the " flyting," the " auld brig " dares to utter the famous prophecy :—" I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn," which came true in 1877, when Provost Ballantyne's new bridge of 1785-88, then ninety years old, fell to pieces, and was superseded by the existing masonry.

In " The Brigs of Ayr " the fertility of Burns' fancy during the grand creative period of his muse at Mossgiel is illustrated. The poet fights on both sides—for the old and for the new—with almost equal deftness of stroke, albeit there are traces of prejudice in favour of the " auld brig," which reveal the conservatism of the intellect and the heart inherent in Burns' mixed pyschologic endowment. By the ultimate destruction of the new bridge in an exceptionally heavy thaw-flood, it would be

demonstrated that "architecture's noble art was lost;" yet this impeachment of a superficial modernity is answered by an equally realistic sketch of the forbidding features of Gothic architecture:—"Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices, hanging with threatening jut, like precipices." At length the "flyting" was interrupted by "a fairy train dancing down the glittering stream," attended by minstrels and bards, in front the venerable genius of the stream crowned with water-lilies, the throng being followed by figures that personify the circle of the poet's loves—Female Beauty, The Seasons, Courage, Learning and Worth, and Peace. At sight of these jocund and beneficent fairies, the "Sprites forgot their kindling wrath."

From the technical point of view, this poem, written in rhymed heroics, discovers the influence of Pope and Shenstone upon Burns, not less than that of his two predecessors in the service of the vernacular muse, "Ramsay and Famous Fergusson." Heroics were employed by Ramsay in "The Gentle Shepherd," and by Fergusson in "The Farmer's Ingle," etc. Mr. J. H. Millar finds Burns weaker than his two Scottish forerunners in handling rhymed heroics; but if Burns did move in this measure with tread slower and more heavy than other poets, it was because he carried the bigger burden of thought and imagery. Carlyle, who was severe with his poets, found Burns

at his best in the picture of "The World of Rain and Ruin," resulting from the thaw among the upland sources of the Ayr, which should complete the fall of the rival bridge :—

Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise !
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.

W. CRAIBE ANGUS—A TRUE SCOT.

11TH DECEMBER, 1899.

DECEMBER'S cauld has chilled a heart,
An' taen a life sae hard to spare,
Sae sair for us frae him to part,
And list his wisdom never mair.
Oor Craibe's gane ; we kent his worth,
The mind and brain that overflowed ;
Nae better man frae time cam' forth,
Nae better spirit gaed life's road.

The changefu' years bring sorrow near
To ane an' a' wi' lichtnin' speed ;
Life's cark an' care we dinna fear—
We sorrow ower oor Craibe, deid.
He met the world in conflict keen,
He hated a' its puny ways ;
Deceit an' sham an' a' things mean
He fought an' worsted a' his days.

Big, breezy, bold, an' wond'rous kind,
Wi' piercin' eye that glowed wi' fire ;
A giant, wi' a giant's mind,
Justice and truth his life's desire.
Nane shall we ken in years to come,
Nane trust we as we trusted him ;
His name we'll cherish where we roam,
Nor let its lustre e'er grow dim.

How can ye tell his virtues a',
That shone wi' glitter sure an' bricht ?
Though his loved voice is faur awa',
His spirit rules wi' a' his micht.
And aye in days to come we'll hear
The echo o' his counsel wise,
Till a' the darkness is made clear,
An' a' life's mystery open lies.

His wisdom was o' Nature's ain,
Deep rooted to the earth's fair charms ;
Nor looked he ever wi' disdain
On simple art from Nature's arms.
The beauty of the artist's line,
The simple song from human heart,
All spoke to him, with voice divine,
Of Nature, mother of all art.

We measure men by gear an' cash—
Alas ! the world nae better kens ;
We beck and bow to sorry trash,
And to dead heroes make amen's.
This is the world ; " the pith o' sense
An' pride o' worth " we canna see,
Till Death it comes and Justice len's
Her balance unto you and me.

H. Paterson Bayne.

JEAN ARMOUR.

As a life partner, no one was better suited to get along with the whims and shortcomings of the poet. She made for him a happy home—as happy as she could—and bore up bravely under her sorrows when she saw the crisis of her life at hand and the certainty of widowhood faced her. She was a true

woman, a good wife, an affectionate mother; and her memory deserves to receive more of the praise so generously lavished on some of the other loves of the poet than it has yet received.

He immortalized her in many of his songs; he wove a laurel wreath around her as beautiful and enduring, if not as tragic, as that which he wove around Highland Mary. But there was one difference that speaks volumes for Jean's supremacy in his heart. While he sang of her, she was before him with all the faults, frailties, and shortcomings of humanity; all the tedium, as it has been called, of ordinary daily life, while the other had passed through the veil and so become idealized long before the "lingering star" aroused in him such a force of agonized thought, and in time impelled the world, as a result of his burning words, to elevate the Highland lass into one of the heroines of poetry. And here we might, for the sake of "Bonnie Jean," pause a moment to think how she well repaid the poet for the elevation on which his genius and his love placed her, by her rare devotion to his memory. She has been blamed because before her marriage she was imprudent; of that we cannot pretend to estimate the gravity and extent, we can only judge her by other women, by trying to imagine what another woman would have done in her place with such a suitor as Robert Burns in the very heyday of his passion-power and with his ideas of female purity shattered by his Irvine experience.

But if she fell in weakness to him who became her husband, her after-life fully atoned for it. Against her wifely character not a whisper was raised, and during her long widowhood not even the clatter of Dumfries could cast a slur or raise a hint to her detriment. She survived her husband some thirty-eight years, dying March 26, 1834. Left as she was in a most helpless condition, the people of Scotland came to her aid and soon placed her beyond all fear of want, and later made her—from her standpoint—in easy circumstances. She seemed from that time to consider that she lived to guard the fame of her husband. She refused to leave the little abode in which he had died, she kept it as a show-house to such of his admirers as visited Dumfries, and devoted herself, heart and soul, to the training of his—their children. How nobly she succeeded is well-known. Some were taken from her in early life, and laid to rest beside their father, but she was permitted to see others make their way to honourable positions in the world, while as the sunset began to fall, she found herself the almost sainted centre of her children's children. She gave of her means liberally in charity, the attentions she received from high and low never affected her native good sense, and her home was a picture of content.

PETER ROSS, LL.D.

AS ITHERS SEE HIM.

Much has been said, and much has been written, of Robert Burns in the last hundred years. But to one thoroughly familiar with his life, there is always something left unsaid. And of the hundreds of orations to be delivered, many will consist of a threshing over the old straw. Two-thirds of them will be delivered by ministers of the Calvinistic Orthodoxy, who seldom touch upon the real life and character of the man.

Strange that Scottish organisations should select this class of men for such a purpose, when of all men "the lads in black" were the subject of the poet's most bitter sarcasm—

> But I gae mad at their grimaces,
> Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces;
> Their three-mile prayers, an' half-mile graces—
> Their raxin conscience,
> Whase greed, revenge and pride disgraces
> Waur nor their nonsense.

Scotland is indebted to Robert Burns for much of her religious evolution. He practically drowned out their fire-and-brimstone hell, and ridiculed their personal devil into obscurity, until ministers were ashamed to mention either from their pulpits. The effect of this sarcasm is a more humane doctrine and a more tolerant attitude from the pulpit toward the man who refused to listen to "their nonsense."

MRS. PEROCHON.

THE piece of ground first occupied by the remains of the Poet had been purchased by him some years before his death for a family burial place; and when, in 1815, his dust was re-interred below the Mausoleum, the plot was given by Mrs. Burns to a respected friend, Monsieur Perochon, whose wife was daughter of the Poet's kind patroness, Mrs. Dunlop; and Mrs. Perochon, in accordance with her dying wish, was laid in the tomb of her mother's friend. Mrs. Perochon's husband was a French Royalist, who fled from his native country during its revolutionary troubles, and found a pleasant retreat at Castlebank, Dumfries. He was an estimable gentleman, and, though deprived of eyesight, possessed of many accomplishments. Like her mother, Mrs. Perochon was a warm-hearted, generous, and estimable lady. After the death of Burns the friendship between her and Mrs. Burns was still continued, and it was specially manifested by the former in zealous efforts to benefit the Poet's widow and family, and which the latter lovingly acknowledged. "Much, indeed," wrote Mrs. Burns to Mrs. Perochon on the 2nd of February, 1816, "do I already owe to your disinterested friendship; and while a generous public are anxious to do justice to the genius of my husband, by building so superb a monument to perpetuate his memory, you have paid the best tribute of your

regard by so warmly interesting yourself in behalf of his widow and his children. In this you follow the example of her whose virtues you inherit, and who highly distinguished Mr. B. by a friendship which formed one of his first enjoyments."

JOHN ANDERSON, OF SONG FAME.

John Anderson, the hero of one of Burns' sweetest and most touching songs, lies buried in the churchyard of Fort Augustus, a quiet spot embosomed in hills, and sloping down towards the wide expanse of Loch Ness. He was a native of Ayrshire, a carpenter by trade, and is commonly said to have made Burns' coffin, at the latter's own request, many years before his death. Anderson, to whom Burns was warmly attached, went to Invernessshire after his wife's death, to reside with his daughter Kate, who had married the innkeeper at Invergarry, some eight miles from this village. There he spent his declining years; and thither the Poet, on one of his visits to the Highlands, came to visit his humble friend. He rested for a night at his house; and local tradition still tells how his pony wandered astray during the night, and points out the spot, in the wildest part of the romantic glen of Garry, where it was found and restored to its master. From Invergarry Burns rode over the hills to Foyers, where he penned, or rather pencilled (as he tells us himself) the well-

known lines with which the sight of the majestic falls inspired his muse.

The following inscription marks the grave of John Anderson in Fort Augustus churchyard :—

Sacred to the Memory of John Anderson,
Who died at Invergarry, the 4 May, 1832,
aged 84 years:
also his daughter Catherine, who died at Invergarry,
the 20 December, 1832,
aged 52 years.
Relict of the James Grearson
Who was lost in the "Comet" off Gourock Point
the 21 October, 1825.
This stone is erected by their affectionate children.

"JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO."

Some Original Verses.

Some years ago a Presbyterian minister born in Scotland and educated in Ohio told me of a stanza supplementary to the accepted version of "John Anderson, my Jo," which had been composed by a man of ordinary education whom he chanced to meet, and who, in the estimation of those who knew him, was regarded as just a little "off." If so, it only goes to furnish an illustration of the well-known adage that genius is often closely allied to

madness. It is well-known that the thought embodied in "John Anderson, my Jo," as well as the air, existed long before Burns recast it in the mould of his genius, and gave it the imperishable form in which it will endure for all time. In this respect it resembles "Auld Lang Syne." These songs were evoked out of simple original elements until they reached the fullness of their maturity under the inspiration and the genius of the Ayrshire Bard.

The author of the subjoined stanza said that the verse—

> "John Anderson, my Jo, John,
> We've clamb the hill thegither,
> And mony a canty day, John,
> We've had wi' ane anither;
> Now we maun totter down, John,
> But hand in hand we'll go,
> And we'll sleep the gither at the foot,
> John Anderson, my Jo"—

impressed him with a sense of incompleteness that it raised a presumption that something more should have been said which had been left unsaid. He therefore ventured to add the following:—

> "John Anderson, my Jo, John,
> We winna mind that sleep,—
> The grave sae still and cauld, John,—
> The spirit canna keep;
> But we will mount aboon, John,
> And young again we'll grow,
> And ever live in blissfu' sweet,
> John Anderson, my Jo."

Some time ago another stanza was repeated to me of whose authorship I know nothing. It possesses some merit, and may be given with the foregoing :—

"John Anderson, my Jo, John,
They say it's forty year
Since you ca'ed me your love, John,
And I ca'ed you my dear ;
I think they're surely wrang, John,
It's no' sae lang ago—
It's just a wee bit honeymoon,
John Anderson, my Jo."

Sentiment begets sentiment ; and pathos, pathos. The poetic instinct lies deep in the Scottish heart, and here and there a spark when struck may find the fuel at hand for a flame. Sometimes songs like legends grow. They become modified in order to adjust themselves to conditions representing the varying consciousness of humanity ; eliminations, substitutes, and additions result in a more perfect product, and at last a master mind like Burns' gives them a finishing touch, and leaves them a " thing of beauty and joy forever."

Prof. JAMES K. PATTERSON.

"AULD LANG SYNE" IN FRENCH.

THE French have always been enthusiastic admirers of Scottish poetry, but their attempts to translate them into their own language are not always very successful, as the following rendering of "Auld Lang Syne" will show:—

Doit-on negliger ses amis,
Outrager la tendresse,
De ceux qu'on cherissoit jadis,
Aux jours de ja la jeunesse ?

Aux jours de la jeunesse, ami ?
Aux jours de la jeunesse !
Qu'un doux verre encore, soit rempli
Aux jours de la jeunesse.

Nous courions sur le gazon,
Cueillant les fleurs sans cesse ;
Mais quels penibles pas fait-on
Depuis la jeunesse !

Aux jours, etc.

Nous voila qui roulons dans l'onde,
Quand l'ete nous oppresse ;
La mer, en nous separant, gronde
Depuis la jeunesse.

Aux jours, etc.

Embrassons-nous donc, cher ami !
Ma main la votre presse ;
Buvons un verre tout rempli
Aux jours de la jeunesse.

Aux jours, etc.

Re-translated, somewhat literally, the song would read thus :—

Must one neglect one's friend,
Should we forget the tender feelings
Of those whom we formerly loved,
In the days of our youth ?
In the days of our youth !
Let a sweet glass again be filled
To the days of our youth.

We ran upon the grass,
Pulling flowers unceasingly ;
But oh ! what tedious journeys we've had
Since the days of our youth.

We played in the water
When the summer sun oppressed us.
The sea, now separating us, has been roaring
Since the days of our youth.

Let us embrace then, dear friend !
Let my hand press yours.
Let us drink a glass quite full
To the days of our youth.

HIGHLAND MARY.

I WOULD I were the light fern growing
Beneath my Highland Mary's tread,
I would I were the green tree, throwing
Its shadow o'er her gentle head !
I would I were a wild flower, springing
Where my sweet Mary loves to rest,
That she might pluck me while she's singing,
And place me on her snowy breast !

I would I were in yonder heaven
A silver star, whose soft dim light
Would rise to bless each summer even,
And watch my Mary all the night!
I would, beneath these small white fingers,
I were the lute her breath has fanned—
The gentle lute, whose soft note lingers,
As loth to leave her fairy hand!

Ah, happy things! ye may not wander
From Scotland to some darker sky,
But ever live, unchanging, yonder,
To happiness and Mary nigh!
While I at midnight sadly weeping
Upon its deep transparent blue,
Can only gaze while all are sleeping,
And dream my Mary watches too!

LADY STIRLING MAXWELL.

MARY CAMPBELL, daughter of Archibald and Annie Campbell, was born near Dunoon, on the lower Clyde, probably in 1764. She died in October, 1786. Burns and she parted May 14th, 1786. She was on her way back from the Highlands, when she took fever, and died in the house of a relative in Greenock. Her father was bitterly opposed to Burns; and after Mary's death burned everything connected with the Poet—many letters and snatches of songs, etc. She had an only sister, Annie, twelve years old. Annie used to sing those songs thus sent. They seemed never to have been in writing after the original were burned; and Burns was careless about his manuscripts. From the fact of

William Motherwell copying them from recitation, in the house of one of Anderson's sons, many years after, I judge they were not in Burns' printed works. But they are gone. Motherwell died soon after, and they appear to be lost. The elegant pocket Bible, in two volumes, Burns gave to Mary at parting, with a lock of Mary's flaxen hair in one of them, the mother gave to two daughters of Annie's, telling them that they would get a "chest of drawers" for them when they set up housekeeping. Their brother, William Anderson, got them from the sisters by a present of £5 to each of them, and brought the Bible and the lock of hair to Caledon township, Ontario. Getting in distress for money, he accepted $100 for them—raised in 1840 by some patriotic Scotsmen in Montreal, who sent them to Scotland.

The father never relented in his hostility to Burns, but the mother did, and used to sing the song of "Highland Mary." She had been told he was "wild and profane," but, remembering the one interview she had with him, said, "but he was a real warm-heartit chiel." Of Mary's personal appearance her relatives testify that she was of a good height, very high coloured, and of amiable, retiring disposition. Her mother always dwelt on the quality of truthful sincerity in her daughter, and a cousin of the mother, Mrs. Macpherson, in whose house Mary died, spoke of her as an "angel in the house." Three years after Mary's death,

Burns penned the immortal song of "Highland Mary," and in 1792 the ode "To Mary in Heaven." Three or four other songs that Scotland "will not willingly let die" he wrote in her honour.

Rev. W. Wye Smith.

HIGHLAND MARY'S BIBLE AT ALLOWAY.

Among the relics in the Monument at Alloway is the Bible, in two volumes, given by Burns to Highland Mary. On the fly-leaf of the first volume is written, in the Poet's handwriting: "'And ye shall not swear by my name falsely: I am the Lord.'—Levit. xix. 12." In the second volume: "'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oath.'—Matt. v. 33." And in both volumes is written, "Robert Burns, Mossgiel," with his Mason-mark appended. In one of the volumes is preserved a lock of Highland Mary's hair.

These volumes came into possession of Mary's mother, and were kept in the family. William Anderson, mason, Renton, near Dumbarton, a grandson, took them with him to Canada in 1834. Circumstances forced him to part with them, after being assured they would be carefully treasured beyond the risk of loss or destruction. A party of gentlemen in Montreal bought them for £25, and sent them to the Provost of Ayr for presentation to the Monument. On Thursday, 24th December, 1840, they were formally presented to Provost

Limond, at a dinner in honour of the occasion; and on the Poet's birthday, 25th January, 1841, were delivered to the custodier of the Monument, at a public dinner, in the Burns Arms Inn, Alloway.

SCOTLAND'S LESSON.

Some sixty years ago Scotland thought she had found one akin to Robert Burns in Anderson, a railroad labourer, who wrote under the name of "The Surfaceman." He was taken from the railroad and made assistant librarian in the Edinburgh University. Scotland was determined not to repeat her neglect of another supposed genius. Alas! he was like a thrush that had been captured and caged. His song ceased, and little or nothing was ever heard from "The Surfaceman" afterward.

We therefore wonder if Scotland would have been so rich as she is to-day in poetry and song had Robert Burns found a life of ease and plenty. Would he have ceased to note that —

> Man's inhumanity to man
> Makes countless thousands mourn?

Would we have lost his spirit of independence, and regretted having written —

> The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that;

And his bold declaration—

> For me, before a monarch's face
> Ev'n there I winna flatter?

Would the desire still have existed—

> That I, for puir auld Scotland's sake,
> Some usefu' plan or book could make,
> Or sing a sang at least ?

Would he still have cried out

> " O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
> For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent,
> Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
> Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
> content?"

Who can tell ? Our hearts go out in pity and sympathy for the trials and cares of Robert Burns, but we feel that Scotland and the world at large is richer at least from the sterling independence manifested throughout all his works.

Early in life he nailed his colours to the mast. We rejoice to think that he went down with the flag of liberty and independence still flying.

ROBERT HOWDEN.

WILSON'S PRINTING PRESS.

THE printing press on which the first edition of the Poems was printed, at Kilmarnock, in 1786, by John Wilson, was taken to Ayr on his removal to start the *Ayr Advertiser*. It has never been out of the possession of successive proprietors of the paper, and being made of solid oak, the occasion

of the centenary in 1859 suggested to Mr. Thomas M. Gemmell, its owner, the idea to convert it into something useful and ornamental. The result was a beautiful drawing-room chair, which was occupied at the centenary dinner, in the County Buildings, Ayr, by the chairman, Sir James Fergusson, Bart. The two arms represent *The Twa Dogs*, carved from drawings by Mr. Robertson, animal painter, Glasgow. The spiral ivy-twined pillars that run up on either side of the back are capped by miniature models of *Tam o' Shanter* and *Souter Johnny*. The under part of the back is stuffed, but higher up, in the form of a medallion, there is richly engraved, on wood, the scene at the keystone of the *Auld Brig*, when *Cutty Sark* seizes the tail of Tam's mare. A semi-circular silver scroll round the base of the medallion contains a history of John Wilson's printing press, signed by Thomas M. Gemmell, proprietor, and D. M. Lyon, foreman, *Ayr Advertiser* printing office. Surmounting all, and relieved by thistle and holly leaf carving, rises a miniature bust of Burns, after Nasmyth's portrait; underneath which a small silver shield contains these lines engraved from *The Vision*:—

"'*And wear thou this*,' she solemn said,
And bound the *holly* round my head;
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away."

NEIL GOW.

A NOTED fiddler of Burns' time, whom the Poet has celebrated both in prose and verse, was Neil Gow, whose acquaintance he made on his Northern tour. The meeting is recorded in his journal, under date Friday, August 31, 1787 :—

"Walk with Mrs. Stewart and Beard to Birnam top—fine prospect down Tay—Craigbarns Hills—Hermitage on the Bran Water, with a picture of Ossian—breakfast with Dr. Stewart—Neil Gow plays; a short, stout-built Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest, social brow—an interesting face, making strong sense, kind, open-heartedness, mixed with unmistrusting simplicity—visit his house—Margaret Gow."

Nathaniel Gow was sixty years of age when Burns saw him, having been born at Inver, near Dunkeld, in 1727. He died in 1807.

In the following verse Gow is alluded to as having put down the fashion for foreign music, which, towards the end of the eighteenth century, had sprung up among the fashionable and middle classes in Scotland :—

> But a royal ghaist, wha ance was cas'd
> A prisoner aughteen year awa',
> He fir'd a fiddler in the North
> That dang them tapsalteerie O !

The allusion in these lines is to James I. of

Scotland, a Royal poet and musician, whose spirit, our bard tells us, had entered into and animated "a fiddler in the North," thereby meaning Neil Gow, whose strathspeys and reels dang the Continental airs "tapsalteerie O!" Long may they continue to do so, and more power to them.

JOHN MUIR.

JAMES GOULD.

JAMES GOULD, the well-known Burns' collector, died at Edinburgh on the 25th of March, 1890. For 35 years (1850-85) he was assistant manager of the "Cross" Post Office. While engaged in the post office Mr. Gould began to collect interesting memoranda in connection with Burns, and in his labours in this department evinced a persistency which has been held to amount to absolute genius. With respect to his "Burnsiana," as his Burns collections are called, he has been the means of gathering together materials which, in connection with the Poet, will be consulted by all future students who desire to make their study complete regarding the bard or his poetry. Included in the collection are the genuine autographs of those who presided at the various centenary meetings in 1859, and also those of the Poet's relatives living at the time, besides many eminent men in literature, science, and art, who took part in the celebrations —in all, about three hundred. For these Mr. Gould

penetrated into the obscurest corner of every British settlement, also into portions of the American States, Africa, and India. The first four of these interesting volumes have been deposited in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, and six other volumes have only recently been completed. Besides the "Burnsiana," Mr. Gould also compiled other interesting volumes, such as the "Old Merket Cross," Edinburgh; "The High Street Calamity, Edinburgh," 1861; "St. Giles' Cathedral," previous to and after restoration, 1883; "Stray Green Leaves," an extraordinary collection of poetical pieces printed with autograph, the latter from the authors. For years Mr Gould suffered from impaired health, being often months together in the sick chamber, but he steadily persevered with his favourite compilations until almost the hour of his death.

A HORACE GREELEY TRIBUTE.

New York, January 16th, 1870.

Dear Sir,—I have never failed to attend a Burns' Dinner when prior engagements did not prohibit, as they do this year.

Let me only say that each year extends and diffuses the fame of the Peasant Poet, who, through all the years of my life, has been Scotland's greatest

glory, and I beg leave to offer this tribute to his genius:

The peasant rhymer, who first taught the proud and great to find human nature in the poor and lowly.

Yours, etc.,

HORACE GREELEY.

To Andrew H. H. Dawson, Esq.

CAPTAIN GROSE, THE ANTIQUARY.

On May 12th, 1791, died the once famous Francis Grose, antiquary, artist, and humourist—a man whose name is even unknown, but who lives in the poetry of his friend Burns, and in the antiquarian literature of these islands. He was born, in 1731, at Greenford, Middlesex, and was the son of Francis Grose, a native of Berne, who came to England in the eighteenth century and settled at Richmond, Surrey. He received a classical education, and he studied art in Shipley's drawing school. As early as 1766 he became a member of the Incorporated Society of British Artists, and in 1768 he exhibited a drawing, "High Life Below Stairs," In the next year he exhibited architectural drawings in the Royal Academy.

About this time Grose held the office of Richmond Herald, and subsequently he was adjutant and paymaster of the Hampshire Militia. His system of keeping the regimental accounts was an original one—he put all receipts into one pocket, and made

all his payments from another—and this soon landed him in confusion and difficulty. He adopted the same system when, in 1778, he was made adjutant and captain of the First Surrey, or the Tangier Regiment. In his own money matters he was equally careless, and the fortune which his father left him soon vanished.

In 1773 appeared the first volume of the work on which his chief fame rests—"The Antiquities of England and Wales." This was completed in four volumes, in 1787, and still remains a standard work. The drawings were made by himself, but he had assistance in writing the descriptions. This work completed, he visited Scotland, where, at Friar's Carse, he made the acquaintance of Robert Burns, and the two soon became cronies. Grose was immensely corpulent, "full of good humour and good nature, and an inimitable boon companion," and in Burns he found a kindred spirit, who, however, did not scruple to satirize his friend. To Grose the Poet addressed the well-known poem which begins—

> Hear, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots
> Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's;
> If there's a hole in a' your coats,
> I rede you tent it;
> A chiel's amang you, takin' notes,
> And, faith, he'll prent it!

The second verse describes the captain's personal appearance and his skill with the pencil—

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright—
That's he; mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

Burns gave serious offence to the worthy antiquary by another poem, "Ken ye ought of Captain Grose?"

In the introduction to the "Antiquities of Scotland," Grose says that Burns made out what was most worthy of notice in Ayrshire, and also wrote specially for him, in connection with Alloway Kirk, "Tam o' Shanter," one of the most popular of the Poet's works. (See Burns' General Correspondence, Letter 227.)

The "Antiquities of Scotland" (2 vols.) were published in 1789-1791. Then the author visited the sister isle; but alas! his work here was soon cut short. He had not written and printed more than seven pages of his "Antiquities of Ireland," when he died of apoplexy in Dublin. His remains lie in Drumcondra Church.

THE GREENOCK BURNS CLUB.

"The Mother Club" was instituted, and held its first anniversary meeting, in 1802. Since the year 1885, when it was re-formed and re-constructed on a wider and more useful basis, the club has

never ceased to prosper in its membership, in its finances, in its mission. It has held meetings four times a year regularly, it has observed the Poet's anniversary without a single omission, it has had its delightful summer picnics, it has fostered the study of Scottish history and poetry (especially ballad poetry) among the rising generation by the presentation, after competition, of valuable prizes for knowledge and efficiency in recitation; it has frequently contributed sums in aid of local charities, and it has kept alive a most desirable spirit of Scottish nationality in the community. It may be said to be the most cosmopolitan society in the towns of Greenock and Port-Glasgow—quite a number of prominent gentlemen belonging to the latter place are included in the membership. It is cosmopolitan in this respect, that in religion it knows no creed or sect, in politics it recognises no particular party. Thus it is that at quarterly meetings, and also anniversary gatherings on that night when

> "A blast o' Janwar win'
> Blew hansel in on Robin,"

Whigs and Tories a' agree. Conservatives who think that politics begins and ends with them, Liberals who imagine that they are the salt of the earth, and Radicals who maintain that they, and they alone, have the salvation of the country in

their hands—all these meet on a common level of Caledonianism, with the author of "Tam o' Shanter" as the "keystane" of the social arch. Snobbery is, as far as may be, at a discount at a symposium of Burns' admirers. The Poet's spirit is then in the air, and every man is as good as his neighbour. Yet this feeling of democracy—this tacit confession that a man's a man for a' that—does not interfere with the fusion of the Poet's devotees. The club has, in recent years particularly, drawn about as much support from West-end mansions as from the flats and half-flats of the shopkeepers and better class of clerks and workmen resident in every ward of the town.

The club has property, too, and a habitation, as well as a kenspeckle name. Its principal meeting room in Nicolson Street is a dream of beauty—a suggestion of the artist and the antiquary. Attractive, in some instances valuable, pictures in oil, water-colour, and photography of past hon. presidents and presidents, of prominent members of the club, of famous honorary members literally cover the walls. Among these are Professor Blackie, Lord Rosebery, Andrew Carnegie, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Lord Tennyson, Andrew Lang, Sir Noel Paton—one of whose pictures also graces the right side at the fireplace—Professor Masson, Sir Henry Irving, J. M. Barrie, Colin Rae Brown, Sir Andrew Lusk, Professor Schipper (Vienna), Professor Auguste Angellier (Lille), Rev. Dr. Hugh

Macmillan, Dr. W. C. Smith (author of "Olrig Grange"), "Ian Maclaren," Professor Saintsbury, Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, J. Logie Robertson ("Hugh Halliburton"), C. Martin Hardie, R.S.A., Rudyard Kipling, Colonel John Hay (Washington), Sir Donald Currie, Neil Munro, Dr. Robertson Nicoll (of the "British Weekly"), Hon. J. H. Choate, Dr. John D. Ross, Sir Henry Craik, Colonel Scott, C.B., Sir James Sivewright, General Sir Archibald Hunter, Sir Thos. Lipton, Dr. Robert Caird, Sir George Reid, R.S.A., Sir Thomas Sutherland, Mr. Durward Lely, etc. The collection includes a number of canvasses, chiefly in oil, of Scottish scenes, also a few local pictures, old spinning wheels, curling stones, besides other articles of interest relating to the time in which Burns lived. An old oaken brass-bound chest, placed near the well-stocked bookcase, contains the club's manuscripts, minute-books, and other papers and relics. The principal treasure, perhaps, in this chest is the original minute-book of the Greenock Club, the first entries in which are dated 1801, in the summer of which year the society was first formed. It is an Excise book, which belonged to Robert Burns, or rather was in his keeping and for his use as a Government servant. It is of the once familiar form, oblong and narrow in width, and bound in thick brown calf boards. The leaves have taken on an age-worn appearance, but otherwise the little volume is in a state of good preserva-

tion. On the first leaf, under the top cover, is the following inscription :—" This book was found in the house of the late Mr. Robert Burns at his demise, and presented to the Burns Club of Greenock by Adam Pearson, Esq., of His Majesty's Excise, Edinburgh, A.D. 1801." On the second page is the following, in large and legible handwriting : " Greenock Burns Club and Ayrshire Society." The minutes in this book open with an ode on the Poet composed by Mr. Neil Dougal, a prominent and gifted local musician of the early years of the last century, and the author of some psalm tunes long popular with Presbyterians, including the well-known " Kilmarnock." The long ode—oh, how lengthy and gushing these old odes on Burns usually were !—concludes as follows :

" Sae for his [Burns] sake, the dainty cheil,
I wish his weans and widow weal,
Gude grant them wealth
O' milk and meal
For brose and bread,
And bless them with a cosy beil
Till they are dead."

Homely, yet quite expressive, and a trifle quaint ! This entry is signed by " Robert Barr," who appears to have acted as the first of the long list of secretaries. The next item in the minute-book, " Presented by Mr. Pearson, of Edinburgh," gives a

brief account of the first " anniversary celebration," as it is called even in those early days. It says : " On Friday, 29th January, 1802, the club held their anniversary celebration of the birth of the Bard "—Greenock men were apparently at that time ignorant of the fact that Burns was born on the 25th of that month. The minute-writer goes on to say that about forty members sat down to a " sumptuous repast " in the White Hart Hotel, under the presidency of Mr. John Wright, who proposed the toast of the Poet, and recited an ode—the usual long-drawn-out, winding, word-spun ode. The book shows, as one turns over its stained and yellow pages, that anniversaries were held in 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806, and there were also enthusiastic meetings, invariably in July and at Hallowe'en. It ought to be mentioned that in 1804 the anniversary of the birth was also held at Alloway, in the house in which the Poet first saw the light, Greenock Club being present by deputation. Many entries in the book are most interesting reading. For example, at the January celebration of 1803 there is a presentation of books to the society, along with copy of " the new edition " of Burns' works, from Mr. Archibald Campbell, brother to " Highland Mary ; " in August, 1804, the death of Admiral Duncan, of Camperdown fame, is intimated and entered in the book. At this meeting " Mr. Wright stated that he had known Robert Burns intimately for three years, and having

been associated with him in his profession he could from his personal knowledge deny most emphatically that Robert Burns was a man of intemperate or dissolute habits." In 1806 the anniversary dinner was held for the first time on 25th January, the meeting taking place in the "White Hart Inns," as the wording is. This was a remarkable gathering, for much business was transacted at it, and the minute is long and detailed. One entry has more than usual interest. It says that the club passed a message of sympathy with one of its members, Mr. Greer, and family, on "the loss of their gallant son and brother, who fell most nobly fighting for his King and country at the glorious Battle of Trafalgar." The member who proposed the motion of consolation said that "it seemed a very remarkable coincidence that while the son of one of their most esteemed members had died fighting gloriously"—Britishers were in those dangerous and stirring days jingoes unabashed and unashamed—"under Lord Nelson, the son of another member of the club had, while spared to return to his home and friends, assisted to carry the immortal and gallant Admiral from the deck mortally wounded." Details on this and a mass of other ancient and engrossing matters are in this wonderful Excise-book.

BURNS' TODDY KETTLE.

THE following correspondence is self-explanatory :

January 9, 1923.

" John M'Burnie, Esq.,

" Secretary Dumfries Burns Club,

" Dumfries, Scotland.

" My Dear Mr. M'Burnie and Fellow Members of the Dumfries Burns Club :

" When thinking of the birthday of the ' World's Poet ' a short time ago, it occurred to me that I would like to return to Dumfries a valuable article that belonged to our beloved Bard. Naturally, my thoughts travelled to the Dumfries Burns Club, with the result that the following telegrams were exchanged :

" ' January 3, 1923.'

" ' Desirous present Club Burns' copper kettle from his home, afterward in Globe Tavern, then Albany and Boston, and purchased by me in 1915. Highly prized Burns' relic. Will Club accept ? If so, will forward in time Burns' dinner.

" ' Walter Scott.'

" ' January 4, 1923.'

" ' Club will gratefully accept kettle, and is deeply indebted for this further generous gift from you. Send as full history as possible.

" ' M'Burnie.'

" The story of this article was told in our public press throughout the country in the year 1915,

when an estate was to be disposed of here in New York. Friends furnished me with newspaper clippings regarding the sale, which I attended, purchasing the kettle. It has been viewed by thousands since it came into my possession, not to speak of the many more who previously had the opportunity. The history is engraved on the outside, and since the acceptance of the relic by the Dumfries Burns Club I have added the closing line. The freshly engraved portion is, of course, much brighter than the preceding lines, but it will become as dark as the rest of the engraving in a short time. It is as follows :—

"'Robert Burns' Toddy Kettle.

"'Most prized of the Burns Relics. Copper kettle used by Burns at his home in Dumfries. After his death it became the property of the Globe Tavern. Sold to John Allan of New York ; then owned by J. V. L. Pruyn of Albany, who presented it to his daughter. At sale of her effects (about 1875), it was purchased by Mr. George P. Philes, who held and treasured it until his death. Bought at Public Sale of the Philes Collection in February, 1915,

"'By Walter Scott of New York,
Past Royal Chief of the Order of Scottish Clans, and presented by him to Dumfries Burns Club, January 25, 1923.'

"I am very happy in the thought that this

kettle will henceforth be the property of the Dumfries Burns Club. In a way I am sorry to part with it, because it has occupied a conspicuous place in my office ever since its purchase, always creating an atmosphere of tenderness in the hearts of those who have seen it, and serving as a constant reminder to me of the author of the 'World's Doxology.' However, I believe it should go back to Dumfries—the last earthly home of our beloved Poet—and find a final resting-place among other articles used by him.

—Walter Scott."

BURNS' POVERTY.

Was it Real or Imaginary?

The belief that throughout the whole of his career Burns was a very poor man, who in the end died practically a pauper, is so universally received as an incontrovertible fact that to seek to dispute it is looked upon, even in Burns circles, as the rankest of heresies. Why this should be so is not very evident, for whatever additional lustre may be thought to be thrown upon Burns' achievements by the untowardness of his environment is more than counterbalanced by the vague imaginings of what he might have accomplished in more favouring circumstances, as well as by the Southern's sneers at the neglect he experienced at the hands of the literary patrons of his day. Burns'

poverty is, however, more imaginary than real when brought to the test of proof, more especially in the closing decade of his life. He cleared £500 by the Edinburgh edition, which was no inconsiderable sum to a man in his position when we allow for differences in value then and now. Of this sum he lent £200 to his brother Gilbert, of which more anon. When he became an exciseman his ostensible salary was about 50 pounds a year, but this leaves out of calculation certain other emoluments arising from prosecutions and seizures, which, on the average, yielded more than the official salary of an exciseman of that period. Robert Chambers sets down Burns' average income in Dumfries at £80, but Mr. Macfadyan, of the Scottish Inland Revenue, who has carefully investigated the matter, is inclined to think that, year with year, it was more than double that figure. Certain it is that he lived in Dumfries with considerable pretensions to gentility. He latterly rented a self-contained house, and, good reports and bad reports allowed for, he moved in good society. True, we read of him now and again requesting small pecuniary loans from his personal friends, but that need not surprise anyone conversant with the Poet's characteristic open-handedness wherever money was concerned. "Coin his pouches widna bide in;" whenever he was in funds there were corresponding wants to supply, as witness his orders for books to Peter Hill, and

certain other of his letters bearing on personal expenditure. His extreme nervousness about the seven pounds odds owing to Williamson, the draper, legal notice of which he received a few days before his death, must be credited to the physical conditions under which he laboured, and it is the hysterical tone of the letters he then wrote in apprehension of extreme proceedings being taken against him that has given colour to the time-worn tradition that he died literally without a penny in his possession. The truth is that he had no sufficient reason to fear "the horrors of a jail," the fact of the draper's account having found its way into the hands of a lawyer being satisfactorily explained by a dissolution of partnership, of which previous notice had been given. Burns' exact financial position on his deathbed is fortunately preserved in a series of documents, mostly in the autograph of his brother Gilbert, which recently came under the notice of the writer, and which do not appear to have seen the light before, though they were on exhibition in Dumfries in 1880, when funds were being raised for the local statue of the Poet. The documents are eleven in number, the most interesting being a statement of the financial position of Gilbert as at the date of his brother's death, when the trust estate was formed for behoof of Jean and her children; another showing the accounting between Gilbert and the Poet between 1792 and 1797, the balance owing

being acknowledged over Jean's signature; and, third, a corrected copy of the foregoing, brought down to May, 1798, also signed by Jean, and containing a declaration signed by Gilbert and William Thomson, writer, on behalf of the trustees. Gilbert's debt was not discharged till 1820; another of the documents, in the form of a letter from Gilbert to Jean, bringing out the balance owing as at 16th December, 1820, at £220 7s 6d. It has hitherto been the general impression that Gilbert repaid his loan of £200 by a single payment on receipt of his editorial fee for the edition of Currie which bears his name; but that is not the fact. If, as has been often stated, the loan was granted in 1788, it is certain that the bill was drawn out on 21st December, 1792, from which date down to the death of the Poet Gilbert credits himself with "per contra" sums, in apparent accordance with a verbal agreement come to between them. Some of these entries are exceedingly interesting. For instance, we learn that the Poet paid regularly for the "bed, board, washing, clothes, books, and school wages" of "dear bought Bess," who was brought up by his mother and Gilbert. He also seems to have settled an annuity upon his mother, the sum of £5 being charged against him under that head down to the very day of his death. The exact balance owing by Gilbert when the Poet died is set down at £183 16s. 7d.; immediately following the death,

however, sundry payments on behalf of the family, including an advance of 10 guineas to the widow, reduces the balance to £158 15s. 5d., as at September 1, 1796. A man dying in 1796 with an assured asset of £184 (again contrasting values) could scarcely be considered as in the lowest depths of poverty unless overwhelmed on the other hand with debt. To Gilbert's statement of accounts is luckily appended a list of all the debts owing by his deceased brother as at September 1, 1796, and which were paid by him, doubtless after public advertisement in some form or other. In this list does not appear the draper's bill which had caused the Poet so much concern, and which probably had been discharged in the interim. The total amount of the Poet's debts is £14 15s., including the butcher and other tradesmen, thus leaving a free balance of £170 for the widow and children. Among these accounts appears one in name of a "Dr. Brown," amounting to £2 3s. . . . . From other entries we learn that the grave of Burns cost 2s. 6d., the mortcloth 3s., and that the sum of 5s. was paid for the tolling of the town bells. Gilbert was continually reducing his debt by payments in kind, and these became more frequent when he removed to Dinning, the family of the Poet being supplied with cheese, barley, etc., down to 1809; for though Gilbert went to Grant's Braes in 1801, his brother-in-law, John Begg, was left in charge of the farm down to the former date.

When the debt was finally discharged in 1820, Jean was in such comfortable circumstances that, at her request, the £200 odds was paid to the eldest son, Robert, who had involved himself in pecuniary embarrassments in London, and whose appointment in the Stamp Office was thereby placed in jeopardy.

It is also an article of current belief that Gilbert, being the more prudent of the two brothers, was the more successful from a worldly point of view. Whatever may be embraced in this assertion, it is certain that he was hard pressed for money all his life, and, all things considered, there need be no hesitation in saying that the Poet's worldly circumstances, after the dissolution of partnership at Mossgiel, were always infinitely superior to Gilbert's.

THE NASMYTH PORTRAIT.

THE Original Portrait of Robert Burns, painted by Alexander Nasmyth, while the Poet visited Edinburgh in 1787, was bequeathed to the nation by his last surviving son, Colonel William Nicol Burns, and is now in the National Gallery, Edinburgh. On the back of it is Nasmyth's own inscription :—"Painted from Mr. Robert Burns, by his friend, Alexander Nasmyth, Edinbro', April, 1787." On the same canvas is a certificate written by the Poet's eldest son :—"I hereby certify that this is the original portrait of the Poet

by Alexander Nasmyth, landscape painter in Edinburgh, and is the only authentic portrait of him in existence, or at least the only portrait of the Poet whose authenticity is indisputable. Dumfries, April 8th, 1834. (Signed) ROBERT BURNS."

There are three portraits of this size painted by Nasmyth, this being the original from which all the others are copied. One was executed for George Thomson, and is now in the National Portrait Gallery, London, in the catalogue of which it is stated to have been touched upon by Sir Henry Raeburn, which does not add to its value as a portrait. The other belongs to Mr. Elias Cathcart of Auchindrane, near Ayr, and was painted in 1824, by Mr. Cathcart's permission. In addition to these, Nasmyth also painted a small Cabinet Picture—a full length portrait, as he appeared in Edinburgh at the time he sat for the original from which the likeness is taken. This painting is in the collection of Sir Hugh Hume Campbell, Bart., and is now at Marchmont. An engraving of it was taken for a vignette to Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, in *Constable's Miscellany*. The original picture has been frequently engraved,—the first time by John Beugo, for the Edinburgh edition of the poems, to whom the Poet gave sittings to improve the likeness—as the painting was then only finished to a certain extent—to obtain an engraving; it has also been

engraved by E. Mitchell and William Walker, the latter being a very beautiful specimen of mezzotinto engraving of a high character. Of the Original Nasmyth Portrait there is another version by Skirving, the history of which is curious. It seems that, when a boy, Skirving had seen the Poet, who was a friend of his father's; but the Nasmyth Portrait not quite realising his recollections of Burns, he made an outline from the picture, and, taking it home, filled it up to his own idea of the expression. The result was one of Skirving's best crayon drawings, which has been engraved by Henry Robinson.

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK.

It is now more than a century since Burns wrote this poem. There would, perhaps, be some difficulty in fixing the date of the poem from internal evidence, for we know that some of the productions of our Bard are sadly misleading in this respect; but his brother states that though the Kilmarnock Edition (1786) does not contain the piece, it was written in 1785.

It may be interesting to have a look at Burns' surroundings at this period, and it is fortunate that he has given us an account of his private life at this time. Burns' father died at Lochlea in 1784, and his family, with its mother, trying to escape with something from the wreck caused by a

lawsuit, removed to Mossgiel. Here Burns lived probably the best and the worst of his life in fifteen months. Here he became the father of Bess, and from this place he sallied forth to meet Jean Armour. His first poem, which made much of a hit at the time, the "Address to the Unco Guid," was composed over the sectarian brawls which often disturbed the surface peace of most of the churchyards in the West of Scotland between the sermons. The fight must have been hot in Mauchline. It is noteworthy that the United Presbyterians had their beginning in the village about this time. We may look at this period as the foundation of Burns' poetical standing. Broadly and strongly did he lay his base on the hearts and feelings of the descendants of the Covenanters; and, for a superstructure, he sang their home life, their church feast, their harvest home, their loves, their cares, their crosses, their superstitions, their everything which was dear to them. "The Inventory" and the "Epistle to Davie" give us, in Burns' own words, an account of his everyday life. One qualification must be observed when the "Epistle" is under consideration, and that with regard to Burns' drinking. Burns was probably writing to a "wet hand"—the thing is more than probable—and of course he would make his own potations look as big as possible. The universal testimony of his friends was that they never saw Burns drunk; and "Poosy Nancy"

herself was greatly surprised when she heard that Burns spoke of discussing politics and whisky in her house. With regard to him "setting his staff wi' a' his skill to keep him siccar," when coming down Hood's Hill, I should like to do the same thing under the circumstances; and, though a total abstainer, I must confess to "to leeward whiles takin' a bicker against my will," too, even in broad daylight, when walking through this classic district. The fact is, that the road is so steep, that it is very inconvenient to come down in a straight line. The old road goes over the top of the hill, but the new road, winding round the base of it, has been laid there since Burns' day. It would appear that most of the editors of Burns have been led by this change to suppose that Burns says that he was so drunk that he could hardly keep his feet on a level road. We may look on Burns as being at this time, at least, no worse than his neighbours, but not enough of a boor to deny himself the pleasure of a social night with his fellow-masons in Tarbolton.

It was on a night early in spring when Burns attended one of the meetings of the lodge, and his rival wit, John Wilson, parochial schoolmaster, etc., was also present. The two had many passes of wit, we may presume, and, as the ale loosened their tongues, the mirth grew brisker. But we are told "nae man can tether time nor tide." Twelve o'clock drew near (Forbes M'Kenzie was

not yet), and the company broke up. Burns' road home lay over Hood's Hill. The hill was climbed and descended in safety, save for the bickerings noted in the text; and now the Poet was in the very centre of a rustic scene of great beauty. Behind him, dimly seen by the light of the lately risen moon, lay the village of Tarbolton, sleeping, as it still does, unless when a stranger passes through, and then—well, let that alone. On the right were the finely-wooded lands surrounding Montgomerie Castle; to the left was the mere known as Tarbolton Loch, and right in front was the Fail Burn, which drains the loch. The burn is now crossed by a bridge, but probably there were both a ford and a gangway at that date, and it might not be quite safe for a man with a few glasses of beer to attempt to walk this plank. Having got to within a few yards of the burn without having made up his mind on this question, viz., the fording or bridging of the stream, he sat down on a stone to come to a final decision on the matter. A bright thought came into his head. Wilson had lately added the profession of medicine to his somewhat miscellaneous labours, would it not be possible to have a laugh at him on that score? There, on the stone by the wayside, he composed what is essentially a satire, which for sly humour, broad wit, and human sympathy, is not surpassed by anything in the language. Death met the Poet, and told him of the new opponent he (Death)

had found in the neighbouring dominie. Death appears in this piece, not as a "gruesome carle," but as one who likes to find leisure from a busy calling to have a talk with some one who can listen. It is remarkable, that Death does not complain so much of lives being saved, as of ones which have been let out by other means than his own. He brings in some three characters whom Jock Hornbook has despatched. The henpecked weaver's wife is disposed of in such a way as to lead us to suppose that her absence will be no great loss. The laird only makes room for another. It is when he comes to speak of the unfortunate country girl that we see the feeling side in all its brightness :

> "She trusts hersel' to hide the shame
> In Hornbook's care;
> Horn sends her aff tae her lang hame
> To hide it there."

Death begins to be more of a good fellow than ever when the village clock strikes one, and the spectre and the ploughman part.

To all appearance Burns never intended to publish this poem. If it was his intention to let it appear in print, its non-appearance in the Kilmarnock Edition is scarcely comprehensible. The likelihood is that he repeated the poem at the next meeting of the craft ; and that the schoolmaster, then as now, was thought far too good a mark to miss when he was shown so clearly. It

brought swift disaster to Wilson. He had to leave the village, and removed to Glasgow, where he was appointed Session Clerk of the Gorbals Parish —a better berth, no doubt, than that of schoolmaster to the heritors of Tarbolton. His appointment shows us that Wilson must have been a man of some ability. Burns had probably found in him a foeman worthy of his steel, and it is to be regretted that he was the means of causing him to become, for a time, a wanderer. As has already been said, Burns may be entirely freed from the charge of malice on this occasion. If his object in publishing the poem was only a mercenary one, why did it not appear in the first edition? It is probable that the work was circulating from mouth to mouth, and that each one who knew some of it took it on him to parody it: and these parodies would neither help the dominie nor the Poet: and that Burns, in justice to himself, published the poem, knowing that it had already done all the mischief of which it was capable.

THE DE'IL'S AWA' WI' THE EXCISEMAN.

The original is written on a piece of Excise paper. The verses are said to have been composed extempore by Burns at a meeting of his brother Excisemen at Dumfries. Lockhart, however, says it was composed on the shores of the Solway, while engaged watching a smuggling brig which had

put in there; Lewars was despatched to Dumfries for a party of troopers, and another officer proceeded on a similar errand to Ecclefechan, leaving the Poet with a few men under his orders to watch the brig. "Burns," says Lockhart, "manifested considerable impatience while thus occupied, being left for many hours in a wet salt marsh, with a force which he knew to be inadequate for the purpose it was meant to fulfil. One of his friends hearing him abuse his friend Lewars, in particular, for being slow about his journey, the man answered that he also wished the devil had him for his pains, and that Burns in the meantime would do well to indite a song upon the sluggard. Burns said nothing, but after taking a few strides by himself among the reeds and shingle, rejoined the party and chanted to them the well-known ditty."

PATRICK MILLER.

A Neglected Friend of Burns.

I use the word neglected in a general sense, but in a censorious spirit I do impeach the members of our Edinburgh Burns Clubs among the "neglectfuls," in so far as this friend is never mentioned at the January festivals.

When we take a walk 'mang the crumblin' tombs of Auld Greyfriars we come to a headstone over the entrance to a grave directly facing the grave of Allan Ramsay, which bears the simple

inscription :—" Patrick Miller, Esq., of Dalswinton —a man of versatile genius and ability," and, it may be added, a friend in need and deed to our Bard.

In December, 1785, Burns writes—" An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayrshire Bard with Mr. Sibbald, which I got. I have since discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq., of Dalswinton." It was from this gentleman Burns farmed Ellisland, and Lockhart remarks :—" When Burns determined to give up his lease of Ellisland the kindness of the landlord rendered such a step easy of arrangement." It is interesting to note that Mr. Miller's steward at Dalswinton was the father of Allan Cunningham, with whom Burns was very friendly. Several of Burns' letters to Miller are printed in Chambers's " Burns," and two of Miller's five children are mentioned by our Poet—namely, Patrick, at whose instance Perry offered to place Burns on the list of contributors to the *Morning Chronicle ;* also William, captain in the Horse Guards, M.P. for Dumfriesshire, 1790, alluded to as " The Sodger Youth " in the election ballad, " The Five Carlines."

It was this same Mr. Miller who furnished Alexander Nasmyth, the father of Scottish landscape, and painter of the Poet, with £500 to enable him to visit Italy.

Directly opposite Ellisland is seen Dalswinton House, the seat, in his day, of Patrick Miller, and

on the crest of the hill we see a monument which is known locally as "Miller's Maggot," raised to his memory. On Dalswinton Loch Miller made trial trips with one of his many inventions—the first paddle-steamer in the world. On its first voyage, according to Nasmyth, those on board were Patrick Miller, William Symington, Sir William Monteith, Robert Burns, William Taylor, and Alexander Nasmyth, while a looker-on was Henry Brougham, afterwards Lord Brougham.

Mr. Miller was in business in Edinburgh as a merchant in 1760. In 1767 he was elected a director of the Bank of Scotland, and in 1790 he became Deputy-Governor, and succeeded, by organising a new system of exchanges in London, in placing that institution on the stable basis on which it now rests. He contrived the first drill plough ever used in Britain; also a threshing machine propelled by horse-power, and an iron plough. He likewise introduced the feeding of cattle on steamed potatoes. But the thing on which he most prided himself in agriculture was the cultivation and introduction of fiorin grass hay into Scotland.

Mr. Miller was then 80 years of age, and was presented by the Agricultural Societies of Scotland with two silver vases.

He was one of the largest shareholders in the Carron Iron Company, and he is stated to have been the inventor of the carronade. In 1787 he had

built for him a vessel with five masts, fitted up with paddle-wheels, and moved by manual labour, This, armed with carronades, he offered to the Government of the day, but, on their declining the offer, he presented it to Gustavas III., King of Sweden, who acknowledged it in an autograph letter enclosed in a magnificent gold box, which also contained a small packet of turnip seed, whence sprang the first Swedish turnips ever grown in this country. Among many honours conferred on him was the Freedom of the Corporation by Leith Trinity House, and he is said to have spent nearly all his fortune—put at £30,000—on the various inventions and improvements in which he was so actively engaged.

Such was Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, the friend and landlord of our Rabbie. Let us keep his grave as well as his memory green.

—JOHN T. MURDOCH.

JAMES M'KIE.

JAMES M'KIE, the well-known Burns collector and publisher, died at his residence in Kilmarnock on the 26th of September, 1891. He had nearly completed his 75th year, having been born in 1816. Few Scotsmen living or dead, if we except prominent men of genius, were so widely known as James M'Kie, whose reverence for Burns and everything associated with him was not unlike that which

James Boswell bestowed on Dr. Johnson, and who in a way was almost as useful in getting the world at large to recognise the true character of his hero. Mr. M'Kie did not say or write much in a formal manner, but his life-work was accomplished equally well by the double process of collecting and publishing. His re-production of original editions of Burns' works did much years ago to produce that intimate knowledge of them which is, or rather was, possessed by the common people of Scotland, and which foreigners have been wont to comment on as proof alike of Burns' genius and the capacity of his countrymen and women to appreciate true poetry. As a collector Mr. M'Kie knew no equal, and he either got possession of, or could tell the exact whereabouts of, every original edition, manuscript, or other important relic of the Poet. The erection of the Burns monument at Kilmarnock, with its large and interesting collection of Burnsiana, was greatly the result of his labours, and, in addition, he was identified with the preparation of a Burns' biography, a Burns' calendar, and other similar works. Mr. M'Kie, who was brought up as a bookbinder, started business for himself first of all in Saltcoats, and there began the publication of Burns' literature, which he subsequently carried on in Kilmarnock. He was a man of remarkable energy, unfailing integrity and genial manner, in whose company it was no ordinary pleasure to be privileged to spend a social hour,

and who had a singular power of inspiring all with whom he came in contact with some of his own enthusiasm.

SOUTER JOHNNY.

In transmitting the "Tale of Tam o' Shanter" to Captain Grose, Burns quoted three witch-stories, one of which he made his basis for the "Tale!" Previous to the poem being sent to Grose, Burns was asked who "Tam" was, and replied. "who could it be but the guidman o' Shanter" (Hogg's edition of Burns, volume I., page 204). The Poet spent some of his youth at Kirkoswald when Douglas Graham and John Davidson were among the worthies of that village. Janet Kennedy, who attended the school at Kirkoswald with Burns, made the following statement after his death:—"I well recollect seeing Burns seated on the end of a bench, and seeming amused with Shanter's (all farmers then went by the name of their farms) neighbours joking him about the Alloway witches giving Johnny Davidson and him a fright on their way home from the Ayr New'rday Fair, where he had sold a horse, and put the price of it in his broad blue bonnet, which was blown off his head on going up Brown Carrick Hill amongst the gorse. It was, he thought, a risk to meet his wife after such a mishap, as she was well known, though a good woman, to have a

scathing tongue, when she thought to exercise it either on her husband or faulty neighbours; but at the same time very superstitious, a firm believer in witch-craft. Her husband had to meet the emergency when he came home by telling her what a narrow escape he and John Davidson had made in their ride from the chase of the witches from Alloway Kirk, that she might be thankful to see him in life. Next morning his servant man was sent on his grey mare to seek, as directed, the lost bonnet, in which he was successful, with all the money in it. This story was well known among the neighbours at that time, long before Burns painted it in poetry."

Robert Chambers, in his excellent edition of Burns, (volume III., page 161) accepts the Graham and Davidson story. In the preface to a second edition he says: "I feel it to be ample reward for many anxious efforts to carry historic accuracy into the minutest details of the Poet's life that no error of any importance has been reported to me, neither has any remarkable omission been supplied. I have now the satisfaction of thinking that the work is as near to perfect correctness in matter of fact as the nature of the subject will permit it to be."

The finest collection of "Burnsiana" in existence (books, manuscripts, etc.) is that in the Poet's Monument at Kilmarnock, the largest part of which was purchased from Mr. James M'Kie of that town.

In this collection the writer noticed a pair of child's shoes, labelled "Made by John Davidson (Souter Johnny)." This is referred to in the catalogue of that museum, and also in the Bibliography of Burns, Kilmarnock, 1881.

W. Scott Douglas, in his elaborate and handsome edition of Burns (volume II., page 322), speaking of a visit to Kirkoswald, says, "Our attention was directed also to a tablet over the grave of 'John Davidson, shoemaker,' but we disregarded it, being certain, on the authority of Burns himself, that 'Souter Johnny' was a resident in the town of Ayr. We were twitted with the query—'How then could Tam and the Souter get fou for weeks thegither?' Alas! we replied, thereby hangs a very tragic portion of the tale."

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.

"If bacchanalian songs are to be written at all," says Principal Shairp, "this certainly must be pronounced 'The king amang them a'.' But while no one can withhold admiration from the genius and inimitable humour of the song, still we read it with very mingled feelings, when we remember that perhaps it may have helped some topers since Burns' day a little faster on the road to ruin. As for the three boon companions themselves, just ten years after that night, Currie wrote, 'These three honest fellows—all men of uncommon talents

—are now all under the turf.' And in 1821 John Struthers, a Scottish poet little known, but of great worth and some genius, thus recurs to Currie's words :—

'Nae mair in learning Willie toils, nor Allan wakes the melting lay,
Nor Rab, wi' fancy-witching wiles, beguiles the hour o' dawning day:
For tho' they were na very fou, that wicked wee drap in the e'e
Has done its turn; untimely, now the green grass waves o'er a' the three.'"

DR. CURRIE'S EDITION OF BURNS.

The first collected Edition of the Poetical Works and Letters of Burns, edited by James Currie, M.D., with an Account of his Life, etc., 4 volumes, 8vo., price Thirty-one Shillings and Sixpence, was published on the 12th April, 1800, for the benefit of the Poet's widow and family, and realised £1400. It has always been a favourite edition—within four years it had reached the Fourth Edition of 2000 copies each, and when the copyright expired in 1815 had passed through an Eighth Edition.

DR. CURRIE IN VIRGINIA.

It may interest readers to know that Dr. Currie was for a time resident in Virginia. Like many

another Scotsman he was a son of the manse. He was born on May 31st, 1756, in the parish of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, Dumfriesshire, where his father was parish minister. While a mere laddie he had visited Glasgow, and took a fancy for the strenuous business life, with which he came into contact there for the first time. He was, therefore, induced to enter the service of a mercantile house in Virginia, but, unfortunately, the revolution began soon after, and all business became completely disorganised. Owing to this, and also to the fact that he took the side of the loyalists, young Currie found it advisable to return to the Old World after some five years' residence in the New. He was still only about twenty years of age, and he fell back upon an earlier plan of life by commencing the study of medicine. He took his degree in the University of Glasgow, and settled down to practice in Liverpool. There he soon acquired an eminent position in his profession, and his contributions to medical literature brought him fame by their literary as well as by their scientific merits. Among his intimate friends in Liverpool he ranked Roscoe, the famous Italian scholar, author of the "Lives of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and of his son, Pope Leo X."

In 1792 Dr. Currie paid a visit to his native county of Dumfries, where he made the acquaintance of Burns, and he returned to Liverpool with an enthusiastic admiration of his new friend. On

the death of the Poet, when he learned the condition in which the widow and family were left, he yielded to the urgent entreaty of many who thought him peculiarly fitted for the task ; and, for the benefit of the impoverished family, he brought out the work described above. He has thus at once made a valuable contribution to literature and established a claim upon the gratitude of all admirers of Burns. The work must have exceeded all expectations by its popularity. The first edition, as we have seen, appears to have been sold out at once ; and within thirteen years a seventh edition had been reached. It was in the midst of this popularity that Dr. Currie died, on August 31st, 1805.

THE CROCHALLAN FENCIBLES.

A SHORT time before Burns' introduction to Edinburgh society, William Smellie, Lord Newton, Charles Hay, and a few more wits of the Parliament House had founded a convivial club called "The Crochallan Fencibles" (a mock allusion to the Bonaparte Volunteer movement), which met in a tavern kept by a genial old Highlandman named "Daunie Douglas," whose favourite song "Cro Chalien" suggested the dual designation of the Club. Smellie introduced Burns as a member in January, 1787. Cleghorn also appears to have been on the muster-roll of this rollicking regiment,

which supplies a key to much of Burns' correspondence with him. How the revelry of the boon companions was stimulated and diversified may be as easily imagined as described.

—D. M'NAUGHT.

THE CAST OF THE POET'S SKULL.

SHORTLY after commencing work on the statue at Albany, New York, the sculptor received great assistance in the correct modelling of the head by the loan of a cast of the skull of the great Scottish Poet. Nearly all the other heads of Burns which have been sculptured, represent him as having a high forehead; but the skull shows that the Poet's head was broad and massive rather than high, and in carrying out the outline of the skull correctly lies one of the charms of Mr. Caverley's design in reproducing the man as he was, and not merely an idealised figure of what he might have been.

The history of this cast of the skull of Burns is curious, and as, in connection with the unveiling of the statue, all details regarding it are of interest to our citizens, a brief narrative of the story may be acceptable.

Robert Burns died July 21st, 1796, and his remains were interred in a humble grave in St. Michael's Churchyard, Dumfries, four days later. The widow, the "Bonnie Jean" of so many of his

fine songs, erected a small headstone over the grave. The remains rested there until 1815, when a stately mausoleum was erected in another part of the same churchyard to receive them. The cost of this tomb, the most gorgeous which was ever erected to contain the body of a poor ploughman or farmer, was defrayed by a national subscription, to which rich and poor heartily subscribed. When everything was in readiness for the reception of the body, a small party of the subscribers to the mausoleum, assisted by a few workmen, transferred the remains of the Poet from the grave to the tomb. The task was performed on the night of September 19th, 1815. In the same grave with the Bard lay the bodies of two of his sons who had died in infancy. The coffins of the boys were found nearly entire, and were placed in shells and carried to the mausoleum without difficulty. The coffin of the Poet was almost completely wasted, but when the cover was removed the body seemed perfect, as though death had been of recent occurrence. "The scene," it is said, "was so imposing that most of the workmen stood bare and uncovered, and at the same time felt their frames thrilling with some indefinable emotion as they gazed on the ashes of him whose fame is as wide as the world itself. But the effect was momentary, for when they proceeded to insert the shell or case below the coffin the head separated from the trunk, and the whole body, with the exception of the bones,

crumbled into dust." What was left was reverently placed in the shell and carefully deposited in the mausoleum.

"Bonnie Jean," the poet's widow, died in 1834, and, on the night before her body was placed in the mausoleum, a party of gentlemen went to the vault with a view of obtaining a cast of the skull for phrenological purposes. One of the party, Dr. Archibald Blacklock, made a report, in which he said that the cranium was found in a high state of preservation, and that some small portions of black hair intermixed with gray were observed while detaching some extraneous matter from the occiput. The skull was taken to the house of a Mr. Kerr, a plasterer, and a cast taken from it. A few hours later it was replaced in the vault. There it lay unmolested until 1857, when Burns' eldest son was interred in the mausoleum. The skull was then seen by several gentlemen, and found to be still unimpaired. By them it was placed in its case very carefully, and the whole was enclosed in a casket filled with pitch, so that the relic might be preserved for ages yet to come.

Several copies of the cast of the skull were taken. One went to Mr. George Combe, the eminent phrenologist, who carefully measured it and pronounced it one of the largest and best developed heads he had ever seen. Another cast was secured by Colonel Joseph Laing, of New York, an enthusiast on all that pertains to Burns, and it was

willingly loaned by him to Mr. Caverley for the purpose of aiding in making the Albany statue as perfect as possible.

AN EARLY AMERICAN ELEGY ON BURNS.

THE following elegy, just found in the course of searching for material for the "Bibliography of Burns," is of interest as being probably the first poetical tribute to the memory of our National Bard published in the United States, or, indeed, in all America. It appears in "The American Universal Magazine," vol. I., pp. 447-448, published in Philadelphia in 1797. The author, it will be observed, has made a curious slip in the date of the Poet's death. Kensington is now a suburban part of the city of Philadelphia. To the poem the editor has appended the following note:—"In the poetical department, particularly, our readers will not expect perfection; as valuable purposes may be answered by inserting juvenile attempts, which, though not contemptible, might be improved by the previous correction of a judicious friend, or the advantages of maturer study and experience."

GEO. F. BLACK

AN ELEGY
TO THE MEMORY OF
MR. ROBERT BURNS,
THE CELEBRATED SCOTS POET,
WHO DIED MAY 8TH, 1796.

I.

As late I walk'd beneath the moon's pale rays,
Accusing fortune of my scanty share,
How I had spent—mispent, my youthful days,
To gain the favour of a venal fair;
Instant a form, in solemn sable clad,
Approach'd my path with heedless steps, and slow;
Pale fading laurels hung adown her head,
And her dishevel'd hair did indicate her woe.

II.

"Forbear," she cry'd, "nor think of woes but mine;
The pride of nature and these plains is dead.
The favourite songster of the tuneful nine,
Is fled forever—Is forever fled,—
COILA'S my name—with BURNS I oft *did go*,
And did his bold poetic flame inspire;
Made his enraptur'd fancy smoothly flow,
And taught the bard to catch from heaven the sacred fire.

III.

"With me he wander'd by the purling rill,
With me he stray'd upon the distant lawn,
And oft we climb'd yon cloud-capp'd distant hill,
And reach'd its summit by the early dawn.
O *Melpomene*, muse of tragic woe—
Mourn him who sang of ruin and despair:
E'en smiling *Thalia*, fraught with sprightly glow,
Lament his fate, who sung upon the banks of Ayr.

IV.

" Have we not seen him skim the dewy lawn ?
And with advent'rous fingers sweep the lyre ?
Have we not seen him at the early dawn,
Enraptur'd high with fancy's sacred fire ?
Has not his fame in distant lands been told ?
Has not his voice been pleasant to our ear ?
Has not the youthful gay, the serious old,
Been highly charm'd, who now must shed the bitter tear ?

V.

" Ye sportive Naiades of the gurgling rills,
Lament his fate in *Irvine*, *Ayr*, and *Doon*,
Pour forth your plaints, till all the distant hills
Do nod their sorrow to the silent moon :
For me, I'll weep while hills and streams endure ;
I'll wand'ring mourn, and tell the groves my grief,
The lawn shall hear me at an early hour,
Nor shall I ever deign to take the least relief.

VI.

" I go," she cry'd, " nor ever shall return—
I go forever from this once lov'd field,
My fate is fix'd—disconsolate I'll mourn,
Since Scotia now no longer charms can yield."
Her grief stung bosom heav'd with bitter sighs,
She seem'd prepar'd to take her distant flight ;
She turn'd and left me with her tear-swol'n eyes,
And in a cloud of mist evanish'd from my sight.

W. Reid.

Kensington, *February* 19, 1797.

BURNSIANA IN THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Mr. James Lenox (1800-1880), founder of the Lenox Library, now a part of the New York Public Library, as the son of a Scot, was much interested in Scottish history and literature. The last books purchased by him, acquired at sale of David Laing's library in December, 1879, comprised seven lots. These were all Burns items, namely:—(1) the 1786 Kilmarnock edition, which he acquired for £96; (2) the first Edinburgh edition, for which he paid £5 10s.; (3) the two volume Edinburgh edition of 1797, which cost him only nineteen shillings; (4) the enlarged Edinburgh edition of 1798, which cost him £4 4s.; (5) the Poems and Songs ascribed to Burns, Glasgow, 1801, for which he paid £3 18s.; (6) the Letters to Clarinda, 1802, at £3 12s. 6d.; and (7) the Commonplace Book, 1872, at eight shillings.

Mr. Bernard Quaritch, the London bookseller, acted as his agent at the sale, and in the last letter from Mr. Lenox to him, Mr. Lenox refers to the purchases made at the sale, and then goes on to say: "For nearly a month I have not left my bed, and every exertion is extremely hurtful to me. I do not think I shall be able to make any further purchases of books. After the announcement in your letter, received this morning, of the purchase of the set of Burns' Works, our corres-

pondence, I fear, must cease. I cannot undertake to write to you without injury to myself." The letter is not in Mr. Lenox's hand, but is signed by him. Mr. Lenox died on 17th February, 1880.

The copy of the 1786 Kilmarnock edition contains two verses from the song "How lang and dreary is the Night," in the autograph of the Poet. There is also laid in a holograph letter from John Gibson Lockhart to Dr. Laing, which reads as follows :—

"Sussex Place, Regent's Park,

April 12, 1851.

"Dear Mr. Laing,—I am very much obliged to you for your Deloraine notes, albeit they leave Mr. Croker's millstone what it was.

Your reminder anent Burns caused my cheeks to burn. I had entirely forgotten how the book came into my hands—but here it is, not, I hope, injured beyond what a touch of the binder's skill will repair.

Ever sincerely,

J. G. Lockhart.

D. Laing, Esq."

The first Edinburgh edition is in the original stiff blue paper boards.

The library also possesses two holograph letters of the Poet, acquired at the Tite sale in 1874. The first, dated Mauchline, 31st March, 1788, is addressed to Mr. Robert Cleghorn ; and the second,

without date, is addressed to Clarinda. These letters will be found in the Globe edition of Burns' works, pp. 409-410, 546-547.

GEO. F. BLACK.

LIFE AND DEATH OF CUTTY SARK.

(From "LIFE OF ALLAN CUNNINGHAM," with Selections from his Works and Correspondence, by the Rev. David Hogg.)

THE real "Cutty Sark" was Katherine Steven, or, as curtailed in the dialect of the district, Kate Steen, by which she was commonly called, for no one dared to address her by her *sobriquet*, through fear of the sad consequences which might ensue. She was born in a cottage near the Maidens, and was brought up by her grandmother at Laigh-park, in the parish of Kirkoswald, on the Carrick shore, where she paid the debt of nature many years ago, in a state of extreme indigence, when she had attained a good old age, yet generally dreaded to the last.

When Burns was attending Kirkoswald school he was intimately acquainted with the dwellers along the Turnberry coast. Shanter, the residence of Tam; Glenfit, the abode of "Souter Johnny;" and Laighpark were placed in the immediate neighbourhood of each other, with other cottages around, such as those of the miller and the smith. Kate Steen and her "reverend granny" were

both well known to the Poet, and many an hour he spent in their shieling, listening to the stories of the withered beldame about pirates and smugglers, and also spell-bound by the unconscious cantrips of the young witch, Kate.

Saturday, in the Devil's calendar, was the witches' Sabbath; and it is interesting to mark the synchronical accuracy of the Poet in fixing the time of the jubilant carousal—it was early on Saturday morning. The market-day in Ayr being then, as it still is, on Friday, the Carrick farmer had sat "boozing at the nappy," till "the hour, of night's black arch the keystane," when he mounted his mare and took the road homeward. By the time he reached Alloway Kirk the morning was in and the orgies were begun.

The title of "Cutty Sark" was not an original appellation of the Poet's invention, though it was new in the use he made of it to the young wench of Kirkoswald shore. In a letter to Captain Grose, when collecting his "Antiquities of Scotland," he mentions three witch stories connected with Alloway Kirk, in one of which there is an account of a merry-making similar to that of his own tale, or which was rather the foundation of his tale, and when a belated farmer "was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out with a loud laugh, "Weel luppen, Maggie, wi' the short sark!" and, recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed." In this, then,

we have the first idea of "Cutty Sark," and what was predicted of Maggie is happily converted into an appellation for Nanny. But why Nanny? There was doubtless the same reason for calling Kate Steen *Nanny* as for calling Douglas Graham *Tam*, and his wife, Helen M'Taggart, *Kate*—a desire to avoid the delicacy and the not over-agreeable consequences of direct personality. But to return.

Kate Steen was universally acknowledged to be a woman of very industrious habits, and was of necessity frugal and economical of whatever she obtained. She was accustomed, when travelling from house to house, to take her tow rock and spindle or twirling-pin with her, and spin as she went along. Her kind and obliging disposition secured her a warm reception among the farm-houses in the neighbourhood, and she always returned to her shieling at Laighpark Kiln laden with an abundant supply of the common necessaries of life. Her case was remarkable, but, we believe, by no means peculiar, in having the weird character forcibly thrust upon her. She not only made no pretensions, but repudiated the idea, of being considered a witch; yet a witch she was held to be in public estimation, and in those days that was enough. Her supposed insight into futurity and acquaintance with the destinies of men led also to the belief that she possessed a sway over fate from an intimate connection with Satanic

power. In after life the peculiarity of her dress assisted in no small degree in investing her with supernatural agency; and, consequently, so much was she dreaded by young and old that, whenever she was espied on the highway afar off, with her rock and tow, a different road was taken to avoid coming in contact with her, as her presence produced great anxiety and fear, except when she was known to be favourably disposed. Doubtless she had the foibles and infirmities of her sex and calling; and it was, perhaps, not altogether exaggeration when it was said that she was not reluctant on certain occasions to tell, with an ominous shake of the head, that her meal barrel was nearly empty, and that kail and water made but thin broth. Yet it was seldom this necessity was pressed upon her; for, whether from love or fear, she received a seemingly cordial welcome, and her departure for home gave her no cause to suspect its truth. Still on some occasions the complaint of Mause might have been hers:—

> "Hard luck, alake! when poverty and eild,
> Weeds out o' fashion, and a lonely bield,
> Wi' a sma' cast o' wiles, should, in a twitch,
> Gi'e ane the hatefu' name, 'A wrinkled witch.'
> The fool imagines, as do mony sic,
> That I'm a witch, in compact wi' 'Auld Nick.'"

Kate Steen was of *low* stature, even for a woman,

though we should infer differently from the description given of her as—

> " Ae handsome wench and walie,"

and also for the dexterous part she performed in de-tailing " noble Maggie " at the " keystane o' the brig." But Burns must be here considered as using a poet's licence, either for the sake of the rhyme, or to lend an additional grace to his heroine, even though a witch. A poet's *witches*, as well as his wenches, are oftentimes very exaggerated descriptions of humanity. Burns' lyric heroines, though adorned with the epithets," loveliest," " fairest," " bonniest," " sweetest," and " beyond compare," were, many of them after all, very mediocre specimens of the masterwork of nature. Nay, some of them, it is said, were scarcely up to what is generally regarded as the minimum standard of female beauty. So, in the description of " Cutty Sark," there is certainly much that is exaggerated, much intended to adorn the tale, though she was universally reported as in league with a certain dark conspirator. If not beautiful, she was doubtless powerful :—

> " For mony a beast to dead she shot,
> And perished mony a bonny boat,
> And shook baith muckle corn and beer,
> And kept the country-side in fear."

Among the cantrips imputed to Kate Steen in

the above list is one which is but imperfectly understood, if known at all, in the present day, "Mony a beast to dead she shot." What was the "shoot of dead?" It was a curse or denunciation of evil upon a living object, that bodily disease and death might speedily overtake it. And it was the popular belief in former days that if such an imprecation were made by any one, and especially by one reputed "no canny," it could not fail in producing the desired effect."

In the Kirk-session records of the parish of Tinwald, Dumfriesshire, of date August, 1699, we find that the "shoot of dead" was a crime demanding more than ordinary church censure and discipline. A report having been laid before the Session that "John Carruthers and Jean Wilson were scolding together, and that the said Jean *did imprecate him and his beasts*," they were cited to appear at next meeting, which they did accordingly, but "John declared it was not Jean Wilson (who was brought up by another party on a like charge), but Bessie Kennedy, who, upon a certain Sabbath, did wish that his horse might *shoot to dead*—whereupon it fell sick, and he, bringing it home, and, sitting at his house reading, the said Bessie Kennedy came by, and he telling her that his horse had not thriven since she cursed it, she wished that the *shoot of dead* might light on him and it both." Bessie was summoned, and denied the charge, but acknowledged that when he told

her his horse had eaten none since she cursed it, she replied that if the *shoot of dead* should come on him too, he might give her the blame. Bessie was found to have behaved unchristianly, was rebuked for the same, and dismissed after promising greater watchfulness for the future.

But witches, notwithstanding their cantrips and charms and incantations, are not invulnerable to the shafts of death; and, however often they may have whidded over the green knowes, in the form of some sturdy grey maukin', with shot after shot rattling in the rear, when death draws the trigger the aim is sure. So the time came when "Cutty's" mortal career drew to a close; and the presentiment she had of the day and hour of her decease contributed not a little to confirm the popular reputation of her weird character. One morning she sent for one of her neighbours, and addressed him in the following terms:— "Noo, John, this is my hinmost day in this warl, and the mid-day hour and me will hae an unco struggle. Ye hae lang befriended me and mine, when few cared little how ill we fared. There's my meal barrel in the corner by; mony a time ye hae filled it, but I shall need it nae mair. Tak' it as a present, along with the bake-brod and the bread-roller on the tap o't; and when I'm gane ye'll fin' a bottle in the cupboard, wi' some bread and cheese in the same place. Mak' yersel's comfortable, and mourn na for me."

The meal barrel was a twenty-pint cask, which had seen considerable service of a different kind; the baking-board was a few staves of a similar vessel nailed together; and the bread-roller was a long-necked brandy bottle. Such were the humble gifts conveyed in the dying bequest of "Cutty Stark," and they were till lately in the possession of her friend John, who has followed his grateful neighbour over the unrepassable bourne, and who presented these relics of a wondrous character as a legacy to our informant.

One by one the morning hours crept wearily away, and, exactly at the predicted time, the lingering spirit of "Cutty Sark" departed to another scene. After the necessary obsequies had been performed by some female neighbours to the lifeless body, and the curtains had been drawn closely around, they sat down before the fire to refresh themselves, as directed, with the comforts of the cupboard, when, lo! ere the first morsel had been tasted or the cork drawn, down went the hearth and all upon it, while the whole party fled in terror to the door. After the consternation had been somewhat abated, one bolder than the rest ventured to look through the keyhole, in the fear lest another Alloway Kirk scene should be going on, but all was silent. With trembling hand she lifted the latch and looked in. The body was lying still in death upon the bed as when they left it, and the hearthstone had dis-

appeared save a single corner. They all returned, and found that the cause of their terror was a large vault underneath the hearth, which had been used for the concealment of illicit spirits and other smuggled goods, and also for hiding renegades from the hands of justice. The stone had slidden off one of its end supports, and, with its superincumbent load, was precipitated below. With considerable difficulty the stone was raised and set with earth from an adjoining field! the door was securely fastened, and a few days after the mortal remains of "Cutty Sark" were committed to the dust.

BURNS' LOVE FOR HIS WIFE.

"Burns has been hotly assailed," writes Arthur Warren, in presenting "The Other Side of Robert Burns" in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, "because of his alleged indifference to his wife (Jean Armour), but the fact is he was ardently fond of her. Jean was true to him, and his true affection never really turned from her. Jean worshipped him—literally worshipped him. And when we study her devoted life we must agree that there must have been much that was admirable in the character of a man who was adored by so true a woman. Burns' biographers have paid too scanty attention to all this. There is no use in apologising for the defects of Bobbie's life, but there is such a thing as insisting

too heavily upon them. . . . Too much has been made in the thousand stories of Burns' life of the 'Highland Mary' episode, and too little of what he really felt for Jean Armour, and of Jean's intense loyalty to him and devoted care of him. The real facts about Highland Mary will never be known. They comprise the one episode of Burns' life which is veiled in mystery. But one can study the Poet's life closely enough to see that the persecution which in the early days seemed to hopelessly separate him from love drove him to Highland Mary for solace, and that Mary's sudden death idealised that Highland lassie in his memory. There was not much more to it, and Jean never troubled herself about it. There has been a sad waste of popular sympathy over Highland Mary. It is to loyal Jean our thoughts should turn. Burns' love for her and for his children was very great. When young, she must have been a handsome, comely woman, if not indeed a beauty, and up to middle life her jet black eyes were clear and sparkling. Her carriage was easy, and her step light. In ballad poetry her taste was good, and range of reading rather extensive. Her memory, too, was strong, and she could quote, when she chose, at considerable length and with great aptitude. Of these powers the Bard was so well aware that he read to her almost every piece he composed, and was not ashamed to own that he had profited by her judgment."

EARLY REVIEWS OF BURNS' POEMS.

THE *New London Magazine*, in the very year in which the first edition of Burns was published, has the following appreciative critique:—

"We do not recollect to have ever met with a more signal instance of true and uncultivated genius than in the author of these poems. His occupation is that of a common ploughman, and his life has hitherto been spent in struggling with poverty. But all the rigours of fortune have not been able to repress the frequent efforts of his lively and vigorous imagination. Some of these poems are of a serious cast, but the strain which seems most natural to the author is the sportive and humorous. It is to be regretted that the Scottish dialect, in which these poems are written, must obscure the native beauties with which they appear to abound, and renders the same unintelligible to an English reader. Should it, however, prove true that the author has been taken under the patronage of a great lady in Scotland, and that a celebrated professor has interested himself in the cultivation of his talents, there is reason to hope that his distinguished genius may yet be exerted in such a manner as to afford more generous delight. In the meantime we must admire the genuine enthusiasm of his untutored muse, and bestow the tribute of just applause on one whose name will be transmitted to posterity with honour."

The *New Town and Country Magazine*, of date August, 1787, speaks of him as follows :—

"Robert Burns, we are informed, is a ploughman, but blessed by Nature with a powerful genius. His subjects are not, as might have been expected, confined to the objects which surrounded him ; he is satirical as well as pastoral, and humorous as well as pathetic. These poems being "chiefly in the Scottish dialect," it must necessarily confine their beauties to a small circle of readers ; however, the author has given good specimens of his skill in English. The following stanza is not only very elegant, but highly poetical."

The stanza quoted is the ninth of the Cottar's Saturday Night, beginning :—

"Oh happy love ! where love like this is found."

It is marvellous that such true though somewhat stinted praise was given in that "elegant" age to one like Burns, whose mission was to abolish the shamming and affected style of poetry then accepted as the only recognised standard.

In the *Northern Gazette*, published in Aberdeen, several articles and quotations from the poems appeared in 1787, all breathing the same spirit of appreciation and generous praise. In this journal Skinner published a poetical epistle to Robert Burns before it became defunct in 1787. In literary circles, his worth was even then known.

It took longer to permeate the multitude. His death, however, did not create the feeling: it merely brought it to the surface and forced its expression.

ROBERT BURNS ON HIS DEATHBED.

LIFE's day draws near the gloaming,
The weary darg o't's dune,
And a' its dear delusions
I maun relinquish sune;
Sune will auld Mither Scotland
The bard that lo'es her tyne,
And hear her loves and praises sung
By ither tongues than mine.

Land o' the sturdy thistle,
And winsome heather bell,
Thou wants nae quivering minstrel
Thy pith and pride to tell;
But strong within his bosom
The tide of song should flow
Who dares to voice thy doughty deeds
And dreams of long ago!

So well'd in mine the music
That broke in waves of fire,
When in the flush of manhood
I swept the patriot-lyre;
And though my failing fingers
Now feebler echoes wake,
Fain would their hinmaist effort be
For dear auld Scotland's sake.

* * * * * * * *

K

O dinna steek that shutter,
And keep the licht awa' ;
But owre me in its glory
Let ilka sunbeam fa' !
For in the mirksome chamber
Where I sae sune maun be,
The bonnie heartsome Simmer Sun
Will shine nae mair for me.

Blithe hae I been to see him
Come owre the hills at morn,
Or in the e'enin', gildin'
Wi' liquid gow'd the corn ;
When 'neath his bauld caresses
Dame Nature beam'd wi' joy,
And ilka thing that breath'd was glad,
And nane mair glad than I.

Then, rapt in poet ardour,
Enchanted ground I trod,
As in my heart, sweet singin',
I heard the voice of God ;
His warks were a' aboot me,
I sang whate'er I saw,
For man and beast, and flower and stream,
I lo'ed them, ane an' a' !

Noo, like a wauf o' Winter
That comes afore its time,
The warld's breath has chilled me,
And killed me in my prime ;
Dark clouds obscure the visions,
Gar'd a' my being thrill,
And in my cauld and flutterin' breist
The heavenly voice is still.

O' talents lichtly cared for,
And noo ayont reca',
How, like a reckless spendthrift,
I've cuist my wraith awa' !
What can I gi'e for answer
When the dread Voice I hear
That o' my thriftless stewardship
In thunder-tones'll speir ?

* * * * * * * *

*Sweet lass, whase step, like music,
Slips the lown chamber thro',
Whase touch is like an angel's
Upon my burnin' broo—
O, frae the paths of virtue
Ne'er let that fitstep stray,
And for a heavenly licht to guide
This heart will ever pray.

And bairns—my blessings on ye !
You'll sune be left your lane,
Wi' life's sair darg afore ye—
In God's name—act like Men !
Abune a' fame or fortune
For this my bosom yearns,
That man for honest worth should prize
The sons of Robert Burns !

* * * * * * * *

Dear Jean, the nicht grows eerie,
I wat I'll slumber sune ;
O lay your loof in mine, luve,
As ye sae aft hae dune ;
And on that faithfu' bosom
Let this worn cheek recline,
That for a heart-beat I may pree
The raptures o' lang syne.

* Miss Jessy Lewars.

O bonnie was the burn side,
And fair the sylvan scene,
Where, 'neath the budding hawthorn,
I trysted wi' my Jean ;
And as I fondly clasped her—
A bliss beyond compare—
I trow the munelicht never shone
On sich a happy pair.

Sinsyne, I've tried her sairly,
But good and true she's been ;
And for a' that's come and gane yet
She's still my Bonnie Jean !
There's nane in a' braid Scotland
That's half sae dear to me ,
And ne'er a hand but this dear hand
Shall close my weary e'e.

Then fare ye weel, my ain Jean,
My first joe and my last,
Through ilka neuk in Scotland
Our names entwin'd ha'e pass'd ;
And think na that she slichts us,
Or sune forgot we'll be—
A hunder year will but increase
Her pride in you and me !

But now on Life's illusions
Maun close these e'en o' mine,
And to the Fount it sprang frae
My soul I maun resign ;
Great Being ! in whose presence
Ere morning I may stand,
Reach from the dark, to guide me through,
Thine everlasting hand !

"THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE."

In looking over some of Burns' poems, and lingering over some of the subjects of his love songs, which are always a delight, and make a winter's evening pass away all too quickly, it was easy to be arrested by the beautiful song of "The Lass o' Ballochmyle," beginning with

> "'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,
> On every blade the pearls hang."

Its intrinsic sweetness brought back a crowd of touching memories, among them the thought that it was the favourite song of the late James Thaw, and sung by him with a charming simplicity of style which will be long remembered by his brither Scots in New York.

It's a song that sends one away back to Mauchline, that picturesque and breezy upland Ayrshire village where the writer enjoyed many a happy ramble.

> "Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes
> And fondly broods with wiser care!
> Time but the impression stronger makes,
> As streams their channels deeper wear."

Burns must have presented quite a figure in those days in that district; as "Rob Mossgiel" he had already made himself known as a poet, and as the principal factor in an intensely interesting love drama. He had written to David Bryce,

at Glasgow, "You will have heard that I am going to commence poet in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about 200 pages; it is just the last foolish thing I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as soon as possible." The world knows now how that Kilmarnock edition was received, whose title-page bore the words:—

"The Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art,
He pours the wild effusions of the heart,
And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire,
Hers all the melting thrill, and hers the kindly fire.—
Anonymous."

At the age of 27 he was still the rustic bard to some extent, and in writing this song, in honour of Miss Alexander of Ballochmyle, he was quite sensible of his powers, but the lady being in another station of life he had doubts as to using the poem in print. "Had she been a country maid," or a Mauchline belle, like any of the following, he might not have been so particular—

"*Miss Miller* is fine, *Miss Markland's* divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw;
There's beauty and fortune to get wi' *Miss Morton;*
But *Armour's* the jewel for me o' them a',"

so he applied to the heroine of the song for her permission to print it in his proposed new edition, and he even begged Mrs. Stewart of Stair to use

her influence with Miss Alexander to that effect. When in Edinburgh, too, he complained, in a letter to Gavin Hamilton, that this song, along with another having a celebrated lady for its subject, were tried by a jury of *literati*, and the author forbidden to print them. He adds :—"I cannot help shedding a tear to the memory of two songs that have cost me some pains ; but I must submit. . . . My poor unfortunate songs come again across my memory. D—— the pedant, frigid soul of criticism for ever and ever!"

In his letter to Miss Alexander the Poet describes with great minuteness the scene and the occasion which gave birth to the song, and refers to "the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way," to the "harmony poured forth by the feathered warblers," and to "the gaiety of the vernal year." The spot of meeting is now marked by a rustic grotto, in which a tablet is inserted, containing a *fac simile* of the Poet's manuscript of two verses of the song.

Dr. Robert Chambers, while on a visit to the Land of Burns collecting information, met many of the people who had known the Poet, or his immediate relatives and friends. And he has recorded, under date "Ayr, Monday, October 9th, 1837 :—Called upon Miss Alexander of Ballochmyle. Fine-looking old lady of 82. [She must have been 31 when the muse of Burns hailed her as the perfection of Nature's works.] Woman of

superior intellect and the finest natural character, unaffected, old-fashioned manners. Story is that she walked out after dinner along the brae behind the house, when suddenly she came upon a man who was standing musing. Startled by the unexpectedness of seeing a stranger in such a place in dusk of evening, passed on without more than looking at the stranger, whose personal appearance was not very prepossessing. Burns was supposed to have been on his return from ——, where he had been fishing. He was taking a short cut, and was trespassing. Some months later Miss Alexander received the letter, which concluded by mentioning that he wished to print it in the second edition of his poems, but would not do so without her permission. She, knowing nothing of him but that he was a village poet of indifferent character, did not think proper to take any notice of it. A grotto is erected at the place of meeting as near as she could recollect. Miss Alexander uses rouge, and probably used it when young, too. Droll to think of the share this might have had in exciting Burns' admiration. Wilhelmina Alexander died unmarried at Glasgow in 1843, at the age of eighty-nine."

It is interesting to note that the other song having a celebrated lady for its subject was that most popular of all his songs, "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon." She was (according to Mrs. Begg's memoranda) Miss Peggy Kennedy, a niece

of Mrs. Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline. Although born heiress of a considerable estate in Carrick—to which she ultimately succeeded—she, at the tender age of 17, proved herself to be one of many frail daughters of Eve who have loved "not wisely, but too well." Cunningham tells us that "this beautiful and accomplished woman fell a victim to her passion for M'Dougall of Logan." It was about the "time of the poet leaving Ayrshire for Edinburgh, at the close of autumn, 1786, that the sad story of this hapless daughter of beauty began to be talked of; and ere he reached the Metropolis he seems to have composed, in reference to her fate, his never dying lyric, "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon."

In this way the student of Burns has an interesting link connecting two of his exquisite songs, the subjects of which, although so different, coming within the eye and scope of the poetic artist, was at once expressed in the most melodious words, a charming and bewitching quality which we also find in his delightful description of his ain bonnie Jean:

"I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
Wi' music charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings
But minds me o' my Jean."

—JOHN S. MACNAB, New York.

BURNS AND FREEMASONRY.

BURNS, beyond question (says Hunter in his "Lectures on Freemasonry") derived considerable advantage from Masonry. It is evident, from the statements which he has placed on record, that it contributed greatly to his happiness in admitting him into close and intimate fellowship with the wise, intelligent, and social, and furnishing him with opportunities for enjoying the "feast of reason and the flow of soul" in the most rational and ennobling manner. It presented him also with one of the best fields that he could find for the improvement of his mind and the display of his talents. In no other society are all the members treated with so much indulgence, and placed on a footing of so much equality. In the Mason's Lodge, merit and worth are sure to be appreciated, and to meet with appreciation and respect. When the young and humble ploughman of Lochlea joined the Lodge of Tarbolton, he was still in a great measure unnoticed and unknown; but no sooner did he receive the stamp of Freemasonry, than he took his place with Sir John Whitefoord of Ballochmyle, Jas. Dalrymple of Orangefield, Sheriff Wallace of Ayr; Gavin Hamilton, writer, Mauchline; John Ballantine, Provost of Ayr; Professor Dugald Stewart, of Catrine; Dr. John M'Kenzie of Mauchline; William Parker, Kilmarnock; and a whole host of Ayrshire worthies,

high and low. By coming in contact with these men his manners were refined, his intellectual energies stimulated, and his merits acknowledged and applauded. Nay, Wood, the tailor; Manson, the publican; Wilson, the schoolmaster; Humphrey, the "noisy polemic;" and all the meaner brethren, seem very soon to have discovered his high intellectual qualities, for they were not long in raising him to the second highest office in the Lodge—an office that caused him, on ordinary occasions, to occupy the master's chair, and perform the work of initiation. In the school of the Lodge, he must, in a great measure, have acquired that coolness of demeanour, that dignity of deportment, that fluency and propriety of expression, and that acquaintance with philosophy and humanity which so astounded and electrified the sages and nobles of Edinburgh, and made his advent in that capital one of the most remarkable incidents in literary history. Instead of a clownish, bashful, ignorant rustic, the most learned and exalted citizens found that he was able and ready to take his place by their side, and that, in everything in which intellect was concerned, he was in some respects their equal, and in others greatly their superior. Burns was principally indebted to Freemasonry for any little gleam of prosperity that shone on his earthly pilgrimage. It was the Freemasons of Ayrshire who invited him to their tables; who furnished him with advice; who read

his productions into fame; and purchased and circulated the Kilmarnock edition of his poems. It was by the advice of his brother Mason, John Ballantine, of Ayr, to whom he inscribed his poem, entitled "The Brigs of Ayr," that he repaired to Edinburgh, and not, as is generally said, by the letter of Dr. Blacklock to the Rev. George Laurie of London, which says not one word of his coming to Edinburgh, but merely suggests the desirableness of publishing a second edition of his poems. His brother, Gilbert, expressly states that, when Mr. Ballantine heard that the Poet was prevented from publishing a second edition, from the want of money to pay for the paper, he "generously offered to accommodate Robert with what money he might need for this purpose (£27); but advised him to go to Edinburgh as the fittest place for publishing." When Burns, acting on this advice, set out for Edinburgh he had not, as he himself states, a single letter of introduction in his pocket, and we would be quite at a loss to know how he was able to form so sudden an acquaintance with the nobility and *literati* of the Scottish capital, were we not assured, on good authority, that he owed this, in a great measure, to his appearance among the Masonic brethren. It was they who introduced him into the best circles of society; who put money in his purse to supply his wants; who procured subscribers for the new edition of his poems; who formed his companions in his

tours ; who were his chief epistolary correspondents; who gave him accommodation in their houses ; who obtained his appointment in the Excise ; and who, last of all, put him in possession of a farm—the chief object of his desire.

As Masons, we are proud that Robert Burns was enrolled in the ranks of our Order, and while we should strive to avoid the " thoughtless follies that laid him low and stained his name," we should at the same time endeavour to imitate his ardent zeal, his open and generous disposition, and his manly and lofty independence.

THE KIRKOSWALD PERIOD.

It is little more than mentioned in the written memoirs of Burns, that the Poet spent his nineteenth summer (1778) in the parish of Kirkoswald, in the southern and more primitive district of Ayrshire. His father was at this time the tenant of the small farm of Lochlee, in the parish of Tarbolton, in the comparatively refined district of Kyle. What seems to have suggested his going to Kirkoswald school was the connection of his mother with that parish. She was the daughter of Gilbert Brown, farmer, of Craigenton, in this parochial division of Carrick, in which she had many friends still living, particularly a brother, Samuel Brown, who resided, in the miscellaneous capacity of farm-labourer, fisherman, and dealer in wool, at the farm-house of Ballochneil,

above a mile from the village of Kirkoswald. This Brown, though not the farmer or guidman of the place, was a person held to be in creditable circumstances in a district where the distinction between master and servant was, and still is, by no means great. His wife was the sister of Niven, the tenant; and he lived in the "chamber," or better portion of the farm-house, but was now a widower. It was with Brown that Burns lived during his attendance at Kirkoswald school, walking every morning to the village where the little seminary of learning was situated, and returning at night.

The district into which the young Poet was thus thrown has many features of a remarkable kind, Though situated on the shore of the Firth of Clyde. where steamers are every hour to be seen on their passage between enlightened and busy cities, it is to this day the seat of simple and patriarchal usages. Its land, composed of bleak green uplands, partly cultivated and partly pastoral, was, at the time alluded to occupied by a generation of primitive small farmers, many of whom, while preserving their native simplicity, had superadded to it some of the irregular habits arising from a concern in the trade of introducing contraband goods on the Carrick coast. This business was first carried on there from the Isle of Man, and afterwards to a considerable extent from France, Ostend, and Gottenburg. Persons engaged in it

found it necessary to go abroad, and enter into business with foreign merchants; and by dealing in tea, spirits, and silks, brought home to their families and friends the means of luxury and finery at the cheapest rate. Such dealings did not prevent superstition from flourishing amongst them in a degree of vigour in which no district of lowland Scotland now presents any example. The parish has six miles of sea-coast; and the village, where the church and school were situated, is in a sheltered situation about a couple of miles inland.

The parish schoolmaster, Hugh Rodger, enjoyed great local fame as a teacher of mensuration and geometry, and was much employed as a practical land-surveyor. On the day when Burns entered at the school, another youth, a little younger than himself, also entered. This was a native of the neighbouring town of Maybole, who, having there completed a course of classical study, was now sent by his father, a respectable shopkeeper, to acquire arithmetic and mensuration under the famed mathematician of Kirkoswald. It was then the custom, when pupils of their age entered at a school, to take the master to a tavern, and implement the engagement by treating him to some liquor. Burns and the Maybole youth, accordingly, united to regale Rodger with a potation of ale, at a public-house in the village, kept by two gentlewomanly sort of persons named Kennedy—Jean and Anne Kennedy—the former of whom was

destined to be afterwards married to immortal verse, under the appellation of *Kirkton Jean*—and whose house, in consideration of some pretensions to birth or style above the common, was always called "the Leddies' House." From that time, Burns and the Maybole youth became intimate friends, insomuch that during this summer neither had any companion with whom he was more frequently in company. Burns was only at the village during school hours; but when his friend Willie returned to the paternal home on Saturday nights, the Poet would accompany him, and stay till it was time for both to come back to school on Monday morning. There was also an interval between the morning and afternoon meetings of the school, which the two youths used to spend together. Instead of amusing themselves with ball or any other sport, like the rest of the scholars, they would take a walk by themselves in the outskirts of the village, and converse on subjects calculated to improve their minds. Both attained eminence: the one became the most illustrious poet of his country; and it is not unworthy of being mentioned in the same sentence, that the other advanced, through a career of successful industry in his native town, to the possession of a large estate in its neighbourhood, and some share of the honours usually reserved in this country for birth and aristocratic connection.

The coast in the neighbourhood of Burns'

residence at Ballochneil presented a range of rustic characters upon whom his genius was destined to confer an extraordinary interest. At the farm of Shanter, on a slope overlooking the shore, not far from Turnberry Castle, lived Douglas Graham, a stout, hearty specimen of the Carrick farmer, a little addicted to smuggling, but withal a worthy and upright member of society, and a kind-natured man. He had a wife named Helen M'Taggart, who was unusually addicted to superstitious beliefs and fears. The *steading* where this good couple lived is now no more, for the farm has been divided for the increase of two others in its neighbourhood; but genius has given them a perennial existence in the tale of Tam o' Shanter, where their characters are exactly delineated under the respective appellations of Tam and Kate. At Glenfit, near Shanter, there was a shoemaker named John Davidson, whose wife, Ann Gillespie, had acted as nurse to the mother of Burns, on which account there was always a friendship between the two families. In the language of a local poet, John

> ——was a gash wee fodgel body,
> Stood on his shanks baith tight and steady,
> As gleg's a hawk, as tough's a widdy;
> Had gabby skill
> To crack a joke wi' wit aye ready,
> Out-owre a gill.

We are informed by the same authority that, at Damhouse, likewise near Shanter, close by the

shore, lived Hugh Brown, a miller, and also Jock Niven, a blacksmith, two drouthy neighbours, to whom the well-known lines are applicable—

> That, ilka medler wi' the miller,
> Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
> That, every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
> The smith and thee got roaring fou on.

Living so near each other, and partaking of the same tastes, it was impossible that the four Carrick men here described should not have been endeared friends. What says our Maybole Poet on this point?—

> Near neighbourhood right weel assisted,
> To souther friendship that consisted
> In drinking jorums, when they listed
> Their placks to jingle;
> In ae short mile ilk might ha'e rested
> At ither's ingle.
>
> Gaun to the kirk, they whiles foregather'd,
> And, warslin' sair wi' conscience, swither'd,
> Till wi' o'ercoming drouth sair bother'd.
> The bell's last croon
> Gat them in Kirkton Jean's fast tether'd,
> A' snugly doon.

There, we suppose, to drink till Monday.

Graham dealt extensively in malt, which he supplied not only to many of the neighbouring hostelries, but also to some of the taverns in Ayr.

It was his business to go there once-a-week—on Friday, which was the market-day of the burgh. His friend Davidson, dabbling a little in the business of a tanner, had wares to dispose of and money to gather on the same day and in the same place ; so the two would proceed to town together. As Graham had to call for liquor at every customer's house, by way of showing respect and gratitude, he had much more of that commodity at his disposal than he chose to make use of himself ; and he was accordingly very glad when the Souter or any other friend went in with him to partake of it. In riding home late one night in the midst of a dreadful storm, Graham lost his bonnet, which contained his purse, and when he arrived at Shanter, could see no better means of excusing the circumstance to his superstitious wife than to state that it had been taken from him by a troop of witches and warlocks whom he had disturbed at their midnight orgies in Alloway Kirk. He afterwards found his bonnet in a place near the wayside, and the money within it ; but the tale by which he had imposed on his wife was not forgotten.

One day, when the scholars of Kirkoswald had been favoured with a holiday, Burns went upon a fishing excursion with a few of the natives, including John Niven, the son of Mr. Niven of Ballochneil, and his own bedfellow. While they were out at sea, the wind rose, and gave token of an approaching tempest, which made the company very

uneasy, and alarmed even the men who were accustomed to fish those seas. The young Poet rallied them on their fears, and said he was willing to stay where he was while it blew off shore, although it should "blaw the horns aff the kye." They made nevertheless for the coast, and landed at the Maiden Heads, two large rocks which rise upon the beach at the farm of Shanter. As they proceeded homeward, the storm rose to its height, accompanied by thunder and deluges of rain. They therefore took shelter in Shanter farm-house, where they found that the guidman was absent at Ayr market. Kate received them frankly, and in course of conversation launched forth into a lament about the habits of her husband, his toping with the miller, smith, and souter, and his late hame-comings from market, prophesying that

——"late or soon,
He wad be found deep drowned in Doon."

Amongst other things, she spoke of Alloway Kirk, which she said he dreaded to pass at night, and yet he never on that account took care to come home an hour earlier. The Poet and his friends stayed with her till twelve o'clock, and then left her still waiting, "a waefu' woman," for the return of her husband.

It was probably some time after this that the affair of the bonnet took place. The story having got abroad occasioned much amusement, and

Graham, wherever he went, was rallied about his adventure at Alloway Kirk. The people of the district who were engaged in the contraband trade had a quarterly meeting for the arrangement of their accounts, and at these meetings there was usually much conviviality. At one, which took place during Burns' residence in the country, he and the goodman of Shanter were brought together, and the latter was rallied most unmercifully by his friends about the story of the bonnet, the whole of which was minutely inquired into and made a subject of mirth. Thus was the youthful Poet supplied with the best possible commentary upon what he had heard from Kate's own lips about her husband's practices. It is not to be doubted, we think, that the circumstances and traits of life and character which on these two occasions came under his notice were what supplied him with the materials of his inimitable tale of diablerie. Yet it is curious to learn from the tradition of the district, that the young Poet who was nowstudying mankind with so much assiduity, and no doubt secretly delighting himself with the comic points of the characters of his compeers, was afterwards reported by those very compeers to have always appeared to them a heavy, sulky sort of fellow. Youthful inexperience had probably made him silent amidst their boisterous talk, and we know well that, when not in the act of speaking, his countenance was sombre. Little did they imagine

that under that dark brow resided powers fitted to make the whole world party to their mirth.

At Ballochneil, Burns engaged heartily in the sports of leaping, dancing, wrestling, throwing the stone, and others of the like kind. His innate thirst for distinction and superiority was manifested in these as in more important affairs; but though he was possessed of great strength, as well as skill, he could never match his young bed-fellow, John Niven. Obliged at last to acknowledge himself beaten by this person in bodily warfare, he had recourse, for amends, to a spiritual mode of contention, and would engage young Niven in an argument about some speculative question, when, of course, he invariably floored his antagonist. His satisfaction on these occasions is said to have been extreme. One day, as he was walking slowly along the street of the village in a manner customary to him, with his eyes bent on the ground, he was met by the Misses Biggar, the daughters of the parish pastor. He would have passed without noticing them if one of the young ladies had not called him by name. She then rallied him on his inattention to the fair sex, in preferring to look towards the inanimate ground, instead of seizing the opportunity afforded him of indulging in the most invaluable privilege of man, that of beholding and conversing with the ladies. "Madam," said he, "it is a natural and right thing for man to contemplate the ground, from whence

he was taken, and for woman to look upon and observe man, from whom she was taken." This was a conceit; but it was the conceit of no vulgar boy.

At his departure from Kirkoswald, Burns engaged his Maybole friend and some other lads to keep up a correspondence with him. His object in doing so, as we may gather from his own narrative, was to improve himself in composition. "I carried this whim so far," says he, "that, though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger." To his Maybole friend, Willie, in particular, he wrote often, and in the most friendly and confidential terms. This correspondence continued till the period of the publication of the poems, when Burns wrote to request his friend's good offices in increasing his list of subscribers. The young man was then possessed of little influence; but what little he had he exerted with all the zeal of friendship, and with considerable success. A parcel of copies was accordingly transmitted in proper time to his care, and soon after the Poet came to Maybole to receive the money. His friend collected a few choice spirits to meet him at the King's Arms Inn, and they spent a happy night together. Burns was on this occasion particularly elated, for Willie, in the midst of their conviviality, handed over to him

above seven pounds, being the first considerable sum of money the poor bard had ever possessed. In the pride of his heart, next morning he determined that he should not walk home, and accordingly he hired from his host a certain poor hack mare, well-known along the whole road from Glasgow to Portpatrick—in all probability the first hired conveyance the Poet Burns had ever enjoyed, for even his subsequent journey to Edinburgh, auspicious as were the prospects under which it was undertaken, was performed on foot. Willie and a few other youths who had been in his company on the preceding night walked out of town before him, for the purpose of taking leave at a particular spot; and, before he came up, they had prepared a few mock-heroic verses in which to express their farewell. When Burns rode up, accordingly, they saluted him in this formal manner, a little to his surprise. He thanked them, and instantly added, "What need of all this fine parade of verse? It would have been quite enough if you had said—

"Here comes Burns
On Rosinante;
She's d——d poor
But he's d——d canty."

When these pleasantries had passed, the Maybole youths allowed their poetical friend to go on his way rejoicing. Such is the story of Burns' early

life among the rough-living fishermen and smugglers of Kirkoswald.

—*The Scottish Reader.*

BURNS' EARLY DAYS IN EDINBURGH.

WHERE in literature can the episode of Burns in Edinburgh be matched? In its splendours and its glooms alike it is unique. He was at the nadir of his fortunes in Mauchline in the harvest of 1786. The Kilmarnock edition of his poems had been published. This was his joy, and he had no other then. He had given over his share of the farm of Mossgiel to his brother. His cash was limited to a few pounds, derived from profits on his poems. Dr. Blacklock, the blind poet, upon whom Dr. Johnson, when a visitor in Edinburgh in 1773, "looked with reverence," after reading Burns' book, wrote to the Rev. Dr. Lawrie, a local minister and the Poet's friend, suggesting that Burns should go to Edinburgh and seek a publisher there for a second edition of his poems. His Jean Armour was forbidden to him. Highland Mary was dead. His little travelling box, half-way to Greenock, was recalled. The project of emigration to Jamaica was abandoned. Borrowing a pony from his patron, Dalrymple of Orangefield, he rode to Edinburgh—150 miles—by stages. Already the farmers on the road were his readers.

They lodged him on the journey. At one point a white sheet was hoisted on a fork from the top of a stack of hay for a signal to all the neighbourhood that Burns had arrived. He had small luggage, little money. In Edinburgh he obtained lodgings of a common sort with John Richmond, a clerk whom he had known in Ayrshire, in Baxter's Close in the Lawnmarket, a part of the old town that was then fast deteriorating towards a slum. His letters were dated merely from "Edinburgh," and correspondents were asked to address their communications for him to the "care of Mr. Creech, bookseller."

Burns immediately emerged in Edinburgh as the "lion" of the season. His introductions were effectual. He had held office in Tarbolton and Mauchline as a Freemason. A special meeting of the St. Andrews Lodge, Edinburgh, was convened to receive him, when he was "toasted" with exuberance of Scottish fervour over "the dram" as "Caledonia's Bard," and replied with painful nervousness in an excellent speech. Before leaving Ayrshire, he had dined with Professor Dugald Stewart at Catrine House, and met there Sir John Whitefoord and the Earl of Daer. These gentlemen were in Edinburgh, and their influence was at his service. Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, introduced him to the Earl of Glencairn, also to the popular "Harry Erskine," leader then of the Scottish Bar. He carried a letter to Dr. Blacklock,

who introduced him to Henry Mackenzie, author of "The Man of Feeling," and editor of a weekly periodical called the "Lounger." In the issue of this curious old miscellany for December 9, 1786—ten days after Burns had arrived—Mackenzie published, as from his own polished pen, the earliest review of any note that had appeared of the ploughman's volume. Mackenzie was himself the "Man of Feeling," the kindliest creature of them all in that brilliant circle of wits. Yet has posterity justified him in respect of the "Lounger's" praise of Burns. At the distance of 120 years, the article reads like an appreciation of January 25, 1709. "To repair," to read its closing passage, "the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit; to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it has pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride." Mackenzie's appeal to the throng of Maecenases then in Edinburgh was successful. Poor, distressed, anxious, solitary on the road to Edinburgh, the Poet had hummed to himself the quaint lines of an old popular ballad:

> As I cam o'er by Glenap,
> I met an aged woman,
> Who bade me keep up my heart,
> For the best o' my days were coming.

In his early weeks in Edinburgh it seemed as if this presentiment had already been realised.

Around Burns then lay the old picturesque Edinburgh of the eighteenth century. The brilliant society of the Scottish metropolis opened its arms to receive him with a rush and gush of hero worship. At first the hero, he soon became to his admirers of the aristocracy little better than a freak of human nature, to be stared at in amazement. Upon the imagination of Burns the new urban environment was subduing at the outset; he reeled and staggered in the mind before he found his feet secure on this intoxicating historic ground. What he saw was the old Edinburgh of the boyhood of Sir Walter Scott. Families of quality then resided in the old town, and the new town beyond and around Princes Street was but straggling, shapeless, and inchoate. Among the people letters and art were in glorious bloom after long centuries of war's devastation. Reconciled to the Legislative Union with England of 1707—an event Burns regretted—the city had betaken itself to imitation of Anglican modes. The historians and rhetoricians and philosophers were transplanting English literature upon the Scottish soil. They composed in the English tongue; they affected English—at least the majority of them did—in public address and in conversation. It was not more than forty years since the Stuart

Rebellion of 1745, but the Jacobites were dead or dying, and, in common with Burns,

> Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
> Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
> Old Scotia's bloody lion bore,

they were for the Stuart kings only in romantic sentiment, Jacobites in a poetical sense alone. The vernacular poetry of Fergusson and Allan Ramsay was neglected; the great English masters, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, were the oracles of the hour. The times in Scotland were ripe for the reassertion in an insular genius of the potencies of the vernacular contemplated as a dialect of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. That Burns glorified the Doric in his most fetching poems and songs was a point against him in the superfine commonplaces of literary criticism in which Dr. Blair and Dugald Stewart indulged. The Poet, through sheer force of originality, overcame this barrier. He commanded the praise of a united academic Edinburgh that discovered in him a nation's wonder, throbbing irresistibly in his conversation, not less than in his poetry.

"Illiterate!" An "illiterate" poet! This was the attitude of much of the fashionable society that entertained Burns, and held him forth as the "lion" of the hour in that old, proud, brilliant Edinburgh. His hosts had no more than the most superficial knowledge of the Poet, and Burns' great

dark eyes saw them all from within and without. "When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes," he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop, "you will bear me witness that, when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated with the intoxicating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve."

—*T. P.'s Weekly.*

AN ECHO OF THE 1896 CELEBRATIONS.

A HUNDRED years ago to-day Robert Burns died in the Mill Vennel of Dumfries—a "broken man" in a lowly house. Strange it is to think that of all the Scotsmen of his age—an age filled with illustrious and memorable figures—this ploughman-poet turned Exciseman, who for years had been on the shady side of fortune, should be he whom his countrymen and the world most delight to honour. It is through no mere passing whim of the hour that the name of Burns is to-day uppermost in the thoughts of his fellow Scots, and of all men throughout the world who love and know the pure voice of nature and the spirit of our common humanity. It is a name that has stood the test of a whole century, and never was it so strong to conjure with as it is now. New editions of the poems of Burns, new biographies of his life and estimates of his genius and his character, pour from the press. There are daily gatherings to unveil statues, to lay the foundation-stones of

memorials, to take part in processions, and banquetings, and speechmaking. His songs were never so much on the lips and in the hearts of the people as they are to-day, when the gulf of a hundred years yawns between us and the clouded close of that brilliant and too brief career; and never did admiration for the Poet and love and, one may freely add, respect for the man stand higher than they do at the celebration of the Centenary of his death. If it be said that acknowledgments, post-dated a whole century, are poor and too late amends for the neglect and slights which Burns suffered in his lifetime, it may be answered that this is not the light in which he would himself have regarded the full-hearted and universal tribute that is being paid to his memory. Rarely has one lived and written who took more hearty and honest delight in giving pleasure and in winning applause from his fellows than Robert Burns. In his best moods—and we are bound to take him at his best—he had none of the pride that apes humility. He could take his own measure as well as the measure of his brother men. He was conscious of the mighty gift with which he had been endowed, and he knew, if he did not always apply his knowledge, that a spirit so fine should be touched only to fine issues. He did not pule over his wrongs and his grievances. No one—not even the bitterest of his biographers—was more keenly aware than he of the "thoughtless follies" and

the graver errors which helped to bring upon him his misfortunes. He confessed them, and lamented them so passionately that meaner and less open natures, taking him at his own word, and measuring him with their own puny yardstick, have judged him and spoken of him as a monster of iniquities. So far is he from this that it may be asserted that in some of the songs written in those declining years at Dumfries, when, according to the theory dear to the hearts of his censors, he was pursuing a course of mental and moral degradation, there will be found more of right instinct and healthy insight—to say nothing of genuine poetry—than could be extracted from a gross of the carping critics of his life and of his work.

To Burns it would have been exceeding great reward for the pain and lowliness and disappointment of his latter days to know that he was leaving to his country and to his fellow-men a legacy of song that has grown more precious with the years, and at the end of a century is accounted among the richest possessions ever bequeathed to a nation. But his country and the world, that now cannot say enough in his praise, have they no sense of sadness and regret even while celebrating the close of a hundred years during which they have enjoyed and rejoiced in the inheritance of the dead poet? Does no strain of remorse mingle with the celebration of the finale of the most brilliant and inspiring episode in Scottish song? Undoubtedly there does.

Great part of the passionate affection and enthusiasm with which the memory of Burns is kept in remembrance arises from the feeling that in his lifetime he fell on evil tongues and evil times, and that even his death did not end the misapprehensions and misrepresentations of which he was the victim. He had given royally, even prodigally, of the gifts with which he was endowed; and the world had barely yielded him enough to live upon, and the "unco guid" had peeped and pried into all his faults, which were many, and had not minds and hearts big enough to perceive and acknowledge that these were, for the most part, the faults of his qualities. There is in the ardour of the Burns celebrations, anniversary and centenary, something of this sense of doing penance and making expiation for martyrdom and calumny. It is a generous and a natural feeling which is nowise to be reproved or discouraged. It is, indeed, the most persistent and spontaneous piece of hero-worship which survives in our time. The great heart of Scotland and of the world at least has not misheard and misjudged the man who spoke for it and to it in living words—who was, at one and the same time, the National Bard and the poet of humanity. It is perhaps neither possible nor desirable to separate the life and the character of Burns from his work. So directly does the latter flow from the former that his poems might be, and have been, made the basis of his biography. But

time and the implanted human sense of what is true and beautiful in man and in nature have been purging the wheat from the chaff. At the end of a hundred years the process should be well nigh complete. It is known and acknowledged of men that Robert Burns was not only a marvellously gifted poet, but an inspiring and beneficent force in the national literature and in the national life, and that, through Scotland and the Scottish dialect, he has influenced for good the ends of the earth. He has helped to raise the dignity of labour, and to make the humblest fireside a sacred place—to give sweetness to song, and reasonableness to the controversies of the sects and the moralists. Not merely did he purify the stream of popular poetry; he was, as one of his latest biographers, Mr. Gabriel Setoun, points out, the reformer, all unknown to it, of the Kirk itself. For this, and for his other services, they do well who hold Burns in perpetual honour and who commemorate his centenary both with feasting and with heart-searching.

To Scotland and to Scotsmen Burns and his genius and fate come home with more poignant meaning and power than to the world without. He is their poet before being the poet universal. They feel that they can penetrate and be penetrated by his words and thoughts more than the outsider who has not grown up on the same soil and in the same air as Burns. They owe him

special gratitude in that he has preserved as classic for all time their familiar tongue, which without him might have been doomed like other dialects to obscurity. He has rescued much of the choicest of their old lyrical poetry from oblivion; he has married the sweetest of their musical strains to immortal verse of his own. He has done as much as, if not more than, any other man to make their national traits and customs and character known and honoured the world over. It is not only right but inevitable that the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Burns Centenary celebrations should take place in Scottish soil; and it is peculiarly appropriate that the great function held at Dumfries to-day should have as the presiding presence a Scotsman and a student and admirer of Burns so distinguished as Lord Rosebery. But while his native country takes and will continue to hold the lead in singing the praises of the most brilliant of her sons, echoes of what is spoken at Irvine and Dumfries and Glasgow will doubtless come back to us from the ends of the earth. They will be repeated in many tongues, and the chord of human sympathy struck on the Burns Centenary, and sounding so loud and so far, may well seem to optimist ears as presage of the time when

> Man to man the warld o'er
> Shall brothers be for a' that.

Though so much has changed in Scotland and in the world, and changed for the better, since Robert Burns laid down the heavy burden of his life at Dumfries in 1796, we have still, it may be feared, a long way to travel to the age of the "brotherhood of man." But this at least may be said, that the more the poet of the "Cottar's Saturday Night" and "Tam o' Shanter" is loved and studied, and the more clearly it is seen and acknowledged among men that, instead of being a sort of freak of nature—a bundle of passions and foibles endowed with genius—he was satirist, thinker, reformer, literary artist, and even prophet of his race and time, the nearer will the approach be to that "good time coming" which it was the mission of the Poet to proclaim.

—Glasgow Herald.